

Socially Responsible Education in an Age of Anti-Blackness: Core Curricula and Black Studies as Strategic Sites for Cultivating Racial Literacy and Antiracist Ethics

by

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Socially Responsible Education in an Age of Anti-Blackness: Core Curricula and Black Studies as Strategic Sites for Cultivating Racial Literacy and Antiracist Ethics

Jawanza Kalonji Rand, M.Ed., M.A.R., M.A.

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For several years now, we are witnessing a glaring uptick in tactical, political, and inimical assaults on student access to information, curricula, pedagogy, personnel, resources, and programs related to cultivating/advancing racial literacy in U.S. public schools. In several “red” and “purple” states across the nation, public schools are no longer preserved spaces that allow or encourage educators and students to investigate historically accurate, socially relevant, and diverse forms of scientific and cultural knowledge. The Coronavirus trifecta—pandemic-quarantine-shutdown—of 2020 brought the nation to the brink of various racial and social crises. This confluence of ill-timed circumstances set the stage for a series of unprecedented events that followed. At the University of Pittsburgh, what unprecedented looked like in June 2020 was (1) Black students’ demands for required coursework in Black Studies for all undergrads being immediately embraced and widely supported by governing bodies; (2) then greenlighted by top administrators in about a week’s time, and (3) then resulting in a required course being implemented within two months. Building on the 20-year evolution of racial literacy in Education research and practice, this study investigates and chronicles the creation of the university course, PITT 0210: Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance, and then explores and examines student responses and outcomes to this course in Black Studies—designed and instituted as part of the core curricula. The findings suggest that racial literacy and antiracist ethics can be cultivated/advanced in [university] students when core curricula are strategically utilized as sites to offer critical and accurate instruction on racism, antiracism, anti-Blackness, Black Studies, and by extension: social problems, social justice, ethics,

equity, (de)colonization, and Ethnic Studies. Ultimately, the systematic cultivation of racial literacy and antiracist ethics through courses like PITT 0210 is implicated as a relevant, responsive, and socially responsible curricular intervention and public education priority.

Preface

Tribute/Dedication

I am because we are. I made it this far because of these family members. Eternal thanks!

My mom, Patricia Ann (McLendon) Winbush. The completion of this doctorate in Education is first and foremost a tribute to my mom and a toast to the deep sacrifices she made to be a powerful mother and way-maker for me and my baby brother, Faraji (who hit me with \$250 for grad school applications in 2016). Our mom is highly educated and a majorly decorated teacher-emeritus. She has a M.S. and an Ed.S., but has been ABD since 1981 when she interrupted her doctoral study at Peabody Vanderbilt to continue teaching full time while she was pregnant, raising me, and being a wife, sister, and daughter. Knowing that she never finished her doctorate in Education after being so close (like so many African American moms) fueled me to finish my dissertation for both of us!

My grandad, John Wesley McLendon (1926-2015). My grandad took great interest in me and my education. I benefited immeasurably from the time, knowledge, wisdom, examples, resources, hopes, and dreams he invested in me. After five semesters of being the last student to get financially cleared for enrollment, I always remember how amazing it felt when my grandad paid the entire tuition for my senior year at Hampton, in advance. Then he laced me with a beige, 1979 Toyota Celica, which I drove to Virginia from Mississippi. He never let me forget my childhood career aspiration: to be the Speaker of the House (U.S. Reps). My grandad was the one who told me it was the obligation of the younger generation to surpass [the achievements of] the older generation. Well, John McLendon from Shubuta, MS was a boss—one of the most accomplished men amongst his peers. So, attempting to match, if not top, his achievements and honor his insights acts as an eternal compass which keeps me grounded and grindin’.

My grandma, Edna Pearl (Murray) McLendon. My grandad could be the man he was, in large part, because of the exceptional woman he wisely married. Due to her life circumstances growing up in Shuqualak, MS in the 30s and 40s, my grandmother barely attended school after eighth grade. Yet, she is still reading and studying at the age of 94. Despite her own fate, she ensured that all three of her daughters were college graduates. Doing her part to raise the bar.

My dad, Lawrence Charles Rand. Speaking of raising the bar, my dad is a top scholar type. He graduated college early with a double-major and the highest honors. Ten years later, he graduated from Rutgers law school, while providing legal counsel for the Black Panthers and other victims of injustice. Yet, he dissuaded me from becoming a lawyer. As a child, he told me I was going to be a doctor. I don't know if he meant a Doctor of Philosophy, but that's what I am.

My uncle, the Rev. Dr. Otha Gilyard. (1945-2022). Until now, my uncle Gil was the only male with a PhD on my paternal side. By advising and supporting me to pursue Union (instead of Princeton, his alma mater) for seminary—where I studied extensively with James Cone and Cornel West—the trajectory of my educational journey was forever transformed into something extraordinary and mystical. Uncle Gil passed me the PhD baton when he passed on 12/01/22.

My son, Krshna Aminu Tafari Jutte-Rand. Preparing for my son's arrival on Earth is what prompted me to pursue my first graduate degree: an M.Ed. which planted the seed for this PhD. As life would have it, we are both graduating in 2023. He, with an undergraduate degree in filmmaking—living the dream born in my college years, when I studied film, wanted to be a filmmaker, and almost went to film school. I am ever in awe of the dance of our destinies. Axé-O!

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Prelude: Pandemonic Pandemonium – Dissertating During the Double Pandemic

Tryna write my dissertation
So I can graduate
Everyday people dyin’
I can’t concentrate
But George can’t breathe
Brionna can’t sleep
Ahmaud can’t run
Amir can’t be... 23

Bodies fallin’ down
Souls flyin’ up
Lookin’ at my phone
Like damn, what the unh!?!?
Another queen gone
A brotha king killed
A mother made childless
His body laid still
For 5 f*ckin’ hours
Forsakin’ on the ground
We dyin’ every day
Every time I look around

Either killed by cops
Or, killed by covid
Double pandemic
Morale is eroded
I can’t think straight
Wit’ troubles on my mind
My soul overflows
And writes these lines
“Songs of Redemption”¹
..... still.....
No police convictions
In the devil’s jurisdiction
Yet, saints steady wishin’

¹ Robert Nesta Marley

We can change their hearts
Or maybe just their minds
Or maybe just the laws
Lest we “whoop some behind”
Every now and then
When from time to time
They lose their humanity
And step ‘cross that line
..... Yo.....
Leave us alone!
Just let us live!
What have we done?
For this “hate you give”²
Klan with no sheets
Patrol urban streets
Invade our abodes
Shoot us while asleep
No knock laws
License to kill
Qualified Immunity
“Stand Your Ground” bill
Defund police!

Fund mental health!
Universal healthcare
Redistribute wealth!
No welfare on Wallstreet!
Racism is real!
Critical Race Theory
Criminals “Stop the steal”
Social illiteracy
Insurrection on the Hill
I can’t “kill the noise”.
I’m human..... I feel.
Only by sheer will
Do I dissertate this fate of...
Pandemonic Pandemonium

² Angie Thomas

1.0 Chapter I – The Overview

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 What Had Happened... A Prologue

February 23rd, 2020. A 25-year-old African American named Ahmaud Arbery is jogging along his regular route, winding through nearby neighborhoods in Glynn County, Georgia. As Ahmaud is rounding out his daily run, heading towards his mother's home, where Wanda Cooper-Jones anticipates the return of her youngest child, the long, sculpted legs of the former high school footballer pick up the pace against the asphalt on the two-lane street. Suddenly, he is confronted by two pale-faced male figures armed with shotguns and a pick-up truck blocking his path forward. There is a third pale-faced conspirator closing in behind Ahmaud in a car, blocking his path for flight. The young, healthy, and unarmed African American male seeking only fresh air, self-care, and a safe return to his mama, finds himself boxed in and under attack by strange figures armed with rifles and metallic horses with wheels. What was Ahmaud to do? An argument ensued. A tussle began. Ahmaud was shot to death, while living his best life. -- --

March 13th, 2020. A 26-year-old African American woman named Breonna Taylor slips into her bed 'round midnight and closes her eyes for good night's rest next to her man; after another long day of labor as an emergency medical technician in Louisville, Kentucky. While Breonna slumbered—perhaps dreaming in the arms of her beau, Kenneth Walker—comfortably in the sanctuary of her bedroom, a local gang of rogues and killers with badges and weapons issued by the Louisville Police Department barged into Breonna's home with a battering ram., Operating under the rouse of a search warrant—issued under false premises and malicious

intent, this unannounced and unwelcomed police invasion was understandably met with a warning shot fired from Kenneth, who was prepared with a pistol for self-defense. These gang members of the “blue curtain killers” reacted by unleashing a hail of fatal gunfire; showering Breonna’s bedroom..., piercing her body with five bullets. Breonna was shot to death, at home in her bed.—

***May 25th, 2020.** A 46-year-old African American man named George Perry Floyd, Jr. was sitting in his SUV outside of a grocery store where he had just purchased a pack of cigarettes. Suddenly, he is approached by a rookie pair of blue shield gang recruits, donned in the uniforms and badges of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). Due to Mr. Floyd’s slow compliance time to commands to show his hands, one of the cops drew his gun. George quickly complied, and the officer holstered his firearm. After a brief struggle, that same cop pulled Mr. Floyd out of his SUV, handcuffed him, and sat Floyd on the sidewalk. The pair of cops told Floyd he was under arrest but were unable to get Floyd into their squad car peacefully. George complained of recovering from COVID-19, feeling claustrophobic, experiencing anxiety and an inability to breathe. A few moments later, another pair of modern-day “slave catchers” employed by the MPD arrived on the scene. This duo included training [day] officer, Derek Chauvin—like the word “chauvinist”—who assumed command as one of the cops struggled to keep Mr. Floyd in the squad car. Chauvin jumped in and Floyd eventually wound-up face-down in the middle of the concrete street, handcuffed and distressed. Three of the cops pinned Mr. Floyd down to the ground, while the fourth crony kept the crowd of bystanders from intervening and ordered others to stop video-recording; obstructing justice in his very own way. Chauvin shoved his knee into the back of George’s neck and pressed his weight into the throat of Mr. Floyd while two of the other “pigs” pressed forcefully on Floyd’s torso and legs. With his majestic, chocolate-brown face pressed into*

the cold, gray pavement, and red blood dripping from his stately nose and lips onto the white lane markings, George Floyd cried out for his Mama, begged for his life and pleaded “I can’t breathe” at least 16 times. As heartless as a noose, gun, knife, guillotine, electric chair, or police bombings (remember MOVE), these agents of systemic, anti-Blackness executed an all-too-common murder ritual on that “Black man” for 9 minutes and 29 seconds.

1.1.2 Time to RISE!

I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a warm, sunny, Friday afternoon in the waning days of spring. The date was June 5, 2020, to be exact. I was alone in the courtyard behind my apartment located on the southside of Pittsburgh; soaking up the sun rays while reading emails and checking social media messages on my phone. As a coach in the RISE (Reach Inside Your Soul for Excellence) program at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), one of my responsibilities was to be in community and active communication with the Black and Brown undergraduate students whom the program was created to serve. One of the ways we coaches accomplished this was being active in their GroupMe group-chat feed. As coaches, we had our own group-chat on GroupMe, but it was the students’ feed where the RISE community effervesced. The spring semester, and therefore my coaching duties, concluded at the end of April. So, the fact that I was still engaging with RISE students via the GroupMe app six weeks after the program year ended was not only a testament to the durable quality of the respect [for the program] and relationships forged during the two years I served as a coach, it was also an indication that this was no “normal” June, or summer session.

Indeed, it was as far from “normal” as most people alive would possibly attest. To much of the world, it was the season of the [covid-19] pandemic. To the “Black” world, it was the season of the “double pandemic.” In addition to covid, it appeared to be yet another open-hunting season on Black and Brown people by police officers and vigilante lynch mobs. As a result of being in a

forced, nationwide, quarantine due to covid, social media took on a whole, next level of importance and relevance to daily existence for many more people. And as a result of the hunting season, the hunted and those in solidarity with them took social media to a whole next level of importance and relevance to their survival and means of resistance. Suffice to say, it was more important than ever for folks to stay connected to their communities via phones and apps, as social distancing and quarantining were the “new normal”—except when protesting in the streets against surges of anti-Black homicide, especially by police forces.

As I scrolled through the most recent messages the members of RISE had posted since I last checked, I was pleased to see a number of posts responding to the wave of #BLM sentiments that ignited after May 25th and in the wake of the anti-Black execution of George Floyd. After almost three weeks of relative silence in the RISE chat, there was a post on May 28th (from a RISE student) expressing solidarity and empathy with those feeling “frustrated and angry,” plus an invitation to “talk or vent”, and a reminder stating, “Know you don’t have to feel alone.” The post concluded with a link to an essay on “using mindfulness as an act of resistance.” On June 1st, another student posted a message about a zoom meeting being planned by alumni and students to create a space “just for us” and “just to talk about our feelings in the current political climate.” It was noted that a Black male professor at Pitt had offered to facilitate.

On June 3rd, another RISE student posted a flyer which announced: “Black and POC Student Decompression Session” on June 5th. The text was superimposed over a b/w image of Angela Davis. This was likely the same event mentioned in the June 1st post. On June 4th, a fourth student posted an announcement inviting students to participate in a “say their names” video she was recording for the Black Action Society (BAS) that would also “bring awareness to the issue and provide facts on the matter”. Her post ended with a request that this info be shared with “any

non-black ally groups at Pitt...” and a link for participants to sign up. This message was the last of the lot that had been posted prior to June 5th. I was finally up to date and ready to read the most current post. The post that would set off a chain of events that have led me to this very moment—chronicling these veritable experiences and crafting these veracious lines for this dissertation.

On June 5th, a totally different student from the previous four, posted an image in the RISE chat that I will have to describe with words. It was a screenshot of an Instagram post from IG user “sydney_mass”. The main image was a picture of Pitt’s iconic Cathedral of Learning. Beneath the picture read the caption: “Require that all Pitt students take a Black Studies course.” Below the caption, it said: “42 have signed. Let’s get to 100!” Connected to this image was another image that had the following text at the top of the page: “Sydney Massenberg started a petition to University of Pittsburgh Administrators.” Attached to that was the link to the petition on Change.org. I was absolutely delighted to see this petition circulating. I clicked on the link, read the accompanying script, and promptly signed it. That was June 5th.

1.1.3 When Opportunity Knocks, Duty Calls: “My Contribution to This Jam”

On August 12th, 2020, I received an email from the Office of the Provost at the University of Pittsburgh which stated that I had been nominated and selected to serve as the Teaching Assistant (TA) for the newly created course on anti-Black racism which would be a required course for all entering first year students at the University of Pittsburgh. I was shocked—in awe of how one afternoon I signed a petition pushing for a required course in Black Studies at Pitt, and two months later, I was being invited to serve as *the* TA for that course. It was kind of surreal.

I reasoned that as the TA of this newly configured and unprecedented course—called forth by the students, faculty, alumni, and community allies of Pitt, and then developed and delivered by “Black and Brown” Pitt faculty—I would have the opportunity to be an active agent in this

concerted and monumental effort. Was this a silver lining in the sad, smokey, *mourning* skies of the bloody and catastrophic season of the double pandemic(s)? Were fragments of the nightmares wrought by covid and wreaked by anti-Blackness being transformed and sublimated into the “freedom dreams” (Kelley, 2002) of African American and Afro-Diasporic students, alumni, and allies? I felt the joy of a major victory. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I was not going to miss my chance to “be the change I seek in world”, even if it meant working as the only TA for this course of 5,000 students.

1.2 Pitt 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance (The ABRC)

How racial literacy can be cultivated and acquired by students through required coursework in Black Studies and social/antiracist ethics within schools is what I wanted my dissertation to investigate. The course in anti-Black racism at the University of Pittsburgh provides a semester-long learning experience for thousands of [mostly white] students at once, over the course of 14 weeks and 16 different learning modules/lessons. As one of this nation’s first mandatory courses in higher education—specifically at a PWI—solely focused on antiracism and Black Studies, PITT 0210: Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology & Resistance (the ABRC) appeared to be a ripe and relevant case-study to explore racial literacy cultivation in a school setting. This dissertation examines how the implementation of this required course in the history, ideology, and resistance to anti-Black racism fared in its aims to advance racial literacy cultivation and acquisition in students who completed the course. Utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative data from the pre- and post-course surveys, student focus groups, and faculty interviews, this dissertation explores, presents, analyzes, and discusses the relationship between PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance and the effort to cultivate racial literacy and antiracist ethics among students.

1.2.1 Student Activism as Social Force

Despite the various types of walls, structures, borders, barriers, and towers erected to separate “the university” from “the community”, the people who occupy both spaces have pre-existing and ever-forming relationships that transcend social constructs, social locations, and the gates of the academy. Student activism and community organizing are central to advocating for and demanding social, policy, and material changes, both on and off campus, and have had a long history of working hand-in-hand (Ferguson, 2017; Kelley, 2018; Patel, 2021). A review of related headlines and events of the last 10 years would suggest this proposition is as true today as it was in the 1960s. When thinking of student activism “in the community”, multiple images of civil rights era sit-ins at department stores led by local college students flash across my mind. In complementary fashion, the significant media coverage, wide community support, and broad public scrutiny aimed at the student protests/sit-in at Howard University during the 2021-2022, is a recent example of community activism *in*, or rather, on behalf of the university’s constituents.

The point here is, concerned students have organized and contributed to antiracist, human rights, civil liberties, and social justice movements in the common streets and communities outside of their campuses, just as concerned “locals” (non-university affiliated residents of the municipalities in which schools are located) have been instrumental in efforts aimed at addressing issues and calling for change inside university walls. Hence, this dynamic is especially relevant to the topic with which this dissertation is microscopically focused. Critical scholarship has revealed that the push and pressure, both physical and ideological, to teach coursework in and/or establish departments/faculties of Black Studies, Chicano Studies, and other varieties of Ethnic Studies, as well as Women/Gender Studies, and Queer Studies as subjects in schools comes as much from the communities just outside of the universities as the students within them (Ferguson, 2012; Kelley,

2018; Patel, 2021). Within a North American and specifically U.S. context, that was the testament of the 1950s, 60s and 70s (Ferguson, 2017).

1.2.2 Race Matters: The Movement for Black Lives

In the 2010s, *that* community groundswell, which fed and bled into student activism on college campuses, was oftentimes connected to what ultimately emerged as the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), more commonly known as “Black Lives Matter” (BLM). Before M4BL crystalized into an organization, the momentum ignited in July of 2013—17 months after 17-year-old Trayvon Benjamin Martin had been racially stalked and slain in cold-blood by a white, self-deputized, community watchman gone rogue in Sanford, Florida—when the hashtags “#blacklivesmatter” and “#BLM” went viral across a wave of social media platforms, like Twitter and Facebook, decrying the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer (intentionally un-named) (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trayvon_Martin).

That was July 13, 2013, when systemic anti-Blackness continued its centuries-long pattern of acquitting whiteness in the U.S. in/justice system. On July 17, 2014, in Staten Island, New York the white hands of state-sanctioned anti-Blackness strangled the breath out of 44-year-old Eric Garner’s “Black” body. This father of six and grandfather of three would never return to his wife and three-month-old baby. About three weeks later, on a hot, August day in the outskirts of St. Louis in Ferguson, Missouri, a white, policeman gunned-down 18-year-old Michael Brown, Jr. in the middle of a neighborhood street. The soon-to-be college freshman was shot six times at point-blank range. His “Black” body was left on the ground, unattended and stripped of its dignity for a cringeworthy number of hours. It was the local organizing and national activism that erupted in the face of this public annihilation of yet another Black male, who, like those before him, was unarmed—a detail that matters much to many U.S. residents, yet matters not to police forces in

this country if you are “Black”. Anti-Blackness inherently trains police and other agents of whiteness—as well as its subjects—to read people possessing skin rich with melanin as “Black”. and all “Black” people—armed or not—as suspicious and/or dangerous. As a consequence, thousands of “Black lives” have been extinguished by police since Trayvon Martin was killed in 2012 (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>).

Herein lies the profundity and poignant relevance of the people’s rallying cry of the last 10 years: “Black Lives Matter”. Especially telling is the fact that despite the flood of video recordings and media coverage exposing the persistent and pervasive phenomena of wanton police brutality, specifically exacted on human bodies marked as “Black”, the frequency of these types of systemic, racialized terror have not ceased or significantly decreased. The names and body-count of the hunted continues to pile without pause: Tamir Rice, age 12; Michelle Cusseaux, 50; Walter Scott; Sandra Bland; Freddie Gray, 25; Janisha Fonville, 20; Philando Castille, 32; Akai Gurley, 28; Laquan McDonald; Daunte Wright, 20; Andre Hill, 47; Manuel Ellis, 33; Atatiana Jefferson, 28; Aura Rosser, 40; Rayshard Brooks, 27; Gabriella Nevarez, 22; Daniel Prude, 41; Tanisha Anderson, 37; Stephon Clark, 22; Botham Jean, 26; and Alton Sterling, 37 (Chughtai, 2022).

These names represent a mere fraction of the “Black Lives” extinguished by police (pa)trolling “Black bodies” in the last ten years. This horrific reality—starting with the Trayvon Martin verdict and crystalizing with the killing of Michael Brown, Jr.—simultaneously supplied and demanded the *raison d’être* for the M4BL to not only maintain its existence, but to organize and proliferate into numerous chapters strategically stationed around the USA (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>). In the wake of the police killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in 2020, the #BLM banner boomed to an apex. The Black Lives Matter movement had gone beyond viral during the summer of 2020 and seemed to be all over the news, as well as

in places unlikely and unsuspected. The following introductory statement presented to all students of PITT 0210 underscores this very point. Notice how the first paragraph echoes the narrative articulated in the preceding three paragraphs. Figure 1.1 presents the letter in its entirety.

After reading the announcement for the course, these were some of the immediate questions that emerged for me as a researcher: *Is this course what Sydney Massenberg and others imagined, proposed, or anticipated? Is this why Massenberg created and circulated that powerful—and now legendary—petition that garnered 5,000 signatures in a few days, and over 7,000 in total? Do the stated goals of the course stand up to and answer her call for transformative and university-wide change? Will this course live up to the legacy she intended for Pitt even though she would not be around to benefit from it since she had just graduated weeks before she conceived the petition?* While these are not the research questions guiding this dissertation, this study created the opportunity for Massenberg and others to address these important questions (see Chapter IV).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This dissertation focuses on how racial literacy can be cultivated in and acquired by students through required/core-curricula coursework in antiracism and Black Studies within schools. This study examines the development and implementation of a university-level course in anti-Black racism and analyzes the measurable results of racial literacy acquisition by students, with a special focus on first-year university students who completed the course during the first semester of the 2020-21 academic year. The 2020-21 academic year was the first time this course, PITT 0210: Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology & Resistance, was offered at the university, and the entering Class of 2024 was the first cohort of students required (by the university administration) to complete this one-credit course as a graduation requirement. All first-year students at the Pittsburgh campus were auto-enrolled in the course during their first semester. In

addition to the two, aforementioned “firsts”, PITT 0210: Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology & Resistance is also one of this nation’s first required courses in higher education—specifically at a primarily white institution (PWI)—solely focused on antiracism and Black Studies.

Welcome to Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance!

This course provides a multidisciplinary introduction and overview to the history and contemporary struggles against anti-Black racism and the ongoing devaluation of Black lives in the US and globally. The police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and many others in recent months have given these issues national and international attention as activists have protested for justice and communities, companies, and various institutions, including universities, have sought to address anti-Black racism and inequities within their own organizations. The University of Pittsburgh has chosen to use this course to bring awareness and develop knowledge around anti-Black racism for its students.

Built around the expertise of Pitt faculty and national and Pittsburgh area activists, this course introduces you to the established tradition of scholarship focused on the Black experience and Black cultural expression. It also seeks to examine the development, spread, and articulations of anti-Black racism in the United States and around the world, and the many ways that Black people have fought for the recognition of their shared humanity. The course will grapple with three key areas of inquiry:

- history
- ideology
- resistance to anti-Black racism

Significantly, the course employs an intersectional analysis--taking into account how race is interwoven into other categories including ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and nationality. The overall goals for the course are for you to be able to understand the history of anti-Black racism, acquire the knowledge to be able to recognize and challenge racist policies and practices, and to develop strategies to be anti-racist in everyday life. So, we look forward to your participation and engagement across all of the modules as we delve into topics that have shaped and will continue to impact our society for decades to come.

Figure 1:1.1 Pitt’s Official Announcement and Introduction of PITT 0210

The course in anti-Black racism at the University of Pittsburgh provided a semester-long learning experience for more than 5,000 thousand [mostly white] students. Over the course of 14

weeks, 16 distinct topics, framed as modules, were presented by a combination of 14 professors from several different disciplines, a student-led webinar with a pair of political activists, and an annual literary arts workshop hosted by a university center. The entire course was petitioned, approved, developed, and implemented in less than three months, between June and August of 2020. This extremely rapid process from conception to actualization was highly unusual and the creation of the course itself represents a noteworthy achievement and remarkable feat of a student-initiated movement in the spring of 2020. The caliber of the course content and the quality of its development and delivery by the academic, CTL, and OTP faculty were conspicuous; and consequently decorated (in the summer of 2021). The course design and execution were innovative and unprecedented in numerous ways—at the local university level, and in some respects, on a national level. All of these elements taken together, made this one extraordinary enterprise and certainly a phenomenon worthy of a dissertation study.

Beyond piecing together and presenting the intriguing story of how this course came to be from the inside, coupled with a consideration of the potential contribution to the broader academy this effort can make, a systematic unveiling of its processes and mechanics can render—in the spirit of presenting promising practices—a necessary investigation in order to gauge the measurable outcomes for students, particularly in terms of racial literacy acquisition. How effective was this course in introducing the history and ideologies anti-Black racism, and forms of resistance to it? How effective was it in raising the awareness and levels of literacy concerning race, racism, and racialized societies/economies, which thrive off racialized violence, exploitation, and domination? Clearly, any mechanism, whether it be a car, jet, ship, microchip, semiconductor, or space shuttle, is only as good as it runs, works, functions, performs, and produces its expected outcomes. Conducting a systematic analysis of the student-reported outcomes concerning their

personal progress as a result of completing PITT 0210 provides important and relevant data by which a pragmatic evaluation of the course has been attempted.

1.3.1 Research Questions

In light of these two features (discussed in the two preceding paragraphs), this dissertation addresses these two research questions:

- I. How was the University of Pittsburgh course, PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance, conceived, developed, and implemented according to those deeply involved?**
- II. What do the measurable outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative data suggest/reveal about the capacity of this core-curricula course in anti-Black racism to cultivate racial literacy (acquisition) in students who engaged the course?**

For the purposes of this dissertation study, “racial literacy” will be interpreted and measured in ways that are specifically and literally matched to/compatible with the overall objectives of the course. As stated in the course introductory letter presented in the previous section: “The overall goals for the course are for [students] to be able to understand the history of anti-Black racism, acquire the knowledge to be able to recognize and challenge racist policies and practices, and to develop strategies to be anti-racist in everyday life.” Thus, racial literacy in this context will be understood as a learned competency/acquired capacity to (1) understand anti-Black racism (historical and current contexts), (2) identify (and respond to) racist policies and practices, and (3) develop (intra-and inter-) personal antiracist sensibilities. Granted, ascertaining, assessing, and evaluating students’ capacity to respond to racist policies and practices, and their personal embrace of antiracist sensibilities is a complex, nuanced, and in real ways, an opaque endeavor. However, racial literacy is a dynamic process (Guinier, 2004); and it is the process with which this

study is most concerned with investigating. Thus, I explore the initial evidence of racial literacy as defined by the course creators and address the potential of a single course to contribute to student growth on this complex idea.

1.3.2 Social Relevance

Beyond the apparent and inherent value of these research questions to this study, to me as author and participant, and the university partners invested in PITT 0210, it is a hopeful intention that the findings of this study have broader resonance and relevance. The findings of the first research question have the potential to provide a blueprint for other universities, as well as scholar-activists (also called “scholactivists”) to replicate the process of conceiving, developing, and implementing policy and core-curricula coursework in service of advancing racial literacy in their respective institutions. By ascertaining racial literacy levels of first-year university students through the systematic analysis of empirical evidence and survey data, the findings of the second research question can provide a set of implications useful to/for primary and secondary educators and policymakers interested in apprehending a sense of what significant numbers of pre-postsecondary students know (and don’t know) about race, anti-Black racism, and the racialized ecosystem of the United States, western civilization, and the modern world.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

1.4.1 Statement of the Problem

At the dawn of this study, the initial problem I found concerning and thought fitting to be redressed by racial literacy cultivation was that in the United States, there was a pervading and persistent apathy, ambivalence, resistance, and/or ill-preparedness among significant numbers of educators to engage students in “race talk”, i.e. critical conversations that help students think about, think through, and thoughtfully address issues and concerns of race, racism, and racial

violence (Milner, Delale-O'Connor, Murray & Alvarez, 2016). This problematic phenomenon has been observed, empirically examined and widely discussed in education research (Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Husband, 2016; Melville, 2014; Milner, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Pitts, 2016; Pollock; 2008; Tieken, 2008). Then, the spring and summer of 2020 happened, precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the fall of 2020, a seed was planted that would rapidly sprout the second, yet related problem and compound the initial problem (stated above). About six weeks prior to the U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump issued an executive order banning the use of taxpayer dollars to fund “racial-sensitivity training” (Cineas, 2020). Because the University of Pittsburgh is a recipient of public funding, its new course in anti-Black racism, PITT 0210, became vulnerable to these political pressures. On November 3, there was a scent of relief in the air as Trump was defeated in the election, but the weeds and vines of his “administration’s war on race-based ideologies—code for theories and practices that examine the racism in American history and institutions” and witch-hunt for what they labeled “divisive, un-American propaganda” (Cineas, 2020) spread like kudzu .

In the spring of 2021, when I began this study, I noted the frequency of national news coverage on the dramatic pushback against the prospects of teaching Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the *1619 Project* in public schools across dozens of states. All in the same week, I saw *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* on Comedy Central, *Roland Martin Unfiltered* on the Black Star Network, and *All In with Chris Hayes* on MSNBC feature extended segments (e.g. 8 minutes to 20 minutes in length) on the political efforts to ban CRT that were sweeping the country. What made this scenario intriguing in general, and especially relevant to this study, was the fact that Critical Race Theory was not being taught in K – 12 public schools in any systematic fashion, if

at all. To be sure, there was no concerted effort to push Critical Race Theory in public school curricula. Like most people who studied Critical Race Theory, I was not introduced to it until graduate school. Thus, this public brouhaha over CRT was understood as an engineered effort by [racially illiterate] white conservatives, Republican party officials, and their sympathizers, to politicize race and countervail the wave of #BlackLivesMatter and race-curiosity—if not race-consciousness—that swelled in the wake of George Floyd’s murder and the succeeding events of the summer of 2020.

Like the social construction of race, this artificially manufactured issue is producing *real* effects. At least “36 states have passed or are considering 137 bills to restrict teaching about racism or LGBTQIA issues”, reported the editors of *Rethinking Schools* (2022-23, p.13). According to research by the RAND Corporation, “almost a quarter of school administrators in the country have warned teachers to stay away from social/political issues” (p. 13). To be sure, the bans on CRT are “measures intended to stifle any classroom discussions of racial justice” (p. 13). To put it bluntly, “We are in the midst of a right-wing assault on anti-racist education” (*Rethinking Schools*, p. 13). Measures like this jeopardize PITT 0210 and threaten to destabilize it and an array of racial literacy and social justice adjacent courses such as ethnic studies, gender studies, and social studies. Recent news has already revealed how this upended the College Board’s AP African American Studies Course (Mumphrey, 2023). Clearly, these consequences were extensions—persisting political residue—from the Trump crops.

To examine the problem more precisely, it is instructive to get acquainted with the “Prohibited Concepts in Instruction” law passed by the Tennessee legislature in spring 2021. It is one of several laws commonly referred to as “Critical Race Theory/CRT bans”. Sixteen states led by GOP/Republican legislatures created and passed similar laws in the 2021-2022 legislative

session (Kelly et al., 2023). “Such laws are intentionally designed to prevent K-12 teachers and students from engaging in critical conversations about race, gender, and oppression” (p. 18). As Kelley et al. (2023) rightly point out: “Ironically, so-called Critical Race Theory bans actually exemplify the racist policy structure that critical race theory attempts to explain” (p. 18).

The vague language of the laws generated confusion and uncertainty [for educators, especially] in interpreting what, in fact, qualified as “a prohibited concept” according to the legalese in Tennessee’s SB0623. This piece of political weaponry masquerading as democratic legislation presented a list of eleven “prohibited concepts” including the following six examples:

- An individual by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, is inherently privileged, racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously;
- An individual, by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex;
- An individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or another form of psychological distress solely because of the individual’s race or sex;
- A meritocracy is inherently racist or sexist, or designed by a particular race or sex to oppress members of another race or sex;
- The state of the United States is fundamentally or irredeemably racist or sexist;
- Ascribing character traits, values, moral or ethical codes, privileges, or beliefs to a race or sex, or to an individual because of the individual’s race or sex.

To this, add the detail that the document contained four caveats coded with terms of constraint and the suspicious use of the word “impartial” (Kelley et al. 2023, p. 23).

Kelley et al. (2023) found that there are serious peripheral and/or collateral harms being inflicted by the anti-CRT legislation in Tennessee. Educators in their study reported: a) “hesitancy

to discuss racial justice with students”; b) making “programmatic changes to anti-racist curriculum”; and c) struggling to remain in (or enter) the profession” while maintaining their “justice commitments”. “These effects are in fact,” argue Kelley et al. (2023), “the goal for conservative lawmakers who have promoted color-blind approaches and made clear their belief that talk about race is racist” (p. 23). It is likely that what they found in their study can be instructive and predictive with regard to what educators in other states navigating similar (politically-driven) legal obstacles are experiencing. In fact, Kelley et al. (2023) reported that schools have taken a self-silencing posture; educators are amending their curricula out of fear, or concern, of being targeted and prosecuted for engaging in “any form anti-racist teaching” (p. 23).

The goal here was to provide some context to how the problem of teachers not being racially literate in an increasingly racially diverse society has been complicated by structural and systemic forces erecting systematic barriers for educators and students to access and engage in classroom learning that advances or cultivates antiracism or racial literacy. These two problems taken together are reflections of a perpetually recycling pool of racial illiteracy (Da Costa, 2016; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2018; Touré & Thompson Dorsey, 2018; Winans, 2010) and social illiteracy (Rand, 2020) resulting in white backlash, “white fragility” (DiAngelo, 2018), “white fear” (Martin, 2022) and “white rage” (Anderson, 2017). Whether in the form of mass violence or microaggressions (Pierce, 1970), racial illiteracy—as a euphemism and candid indictment—is at the root of hate crimes, xenophobia, racism, bigotry, and various forms of domestic and international terrorism. If there is any truth to this claim, then cultivating racial literacy and antiracist ethics through core-curricula coursework in Black/Ethnic Studies is an important step towards exploring, developing, and advancing immediate and direct solutions.

1.4.2 Scholarly Contribution

My search of the literature on racial literacy (and Black Studies) revealed no prior study or syntheses of studies that discussed and/or explicitly examined the development, implementation, and outcomes of a mandatory course in anti-Black racism at an American (U.S.) university or the potential relation of such a course to the acquisition of racial literacy by first-year students attending a four-year institution of higher education. However, studies on cultivating racial literacy in students through various means such as the following proved to be instructive and instrumental in informing this research study: composition coursework with first-year community college students (Sealey-Ruiz, 2011a, 2013) and first-year rural college students (Winans, 2010), classroom dialogue with high school upperclassmen (Bolgatz, 2005; Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014), teaching Black history (King, 2016), and advancing national/federal public policy in education (Canen, 2010; DaCosta, 2016).

1.5 Definitions, Core Constructs & Conceptual Frameworks

To be explicit about the terminology I use in the preceding paragraph and throughout this study, I offer the following notes and definitions. By “course in anti-Black racism” I am making the distinction from extant courses in Black Studies, African American history, Ethnic Studies, Indigenous Studies, Social Work, Sociology, and/or Critical Race Theory that may address similar topics. PITT 0210 was created and listed as a “university course” independently administered through the Office of the Provost, rather than any particular academic department or school. By “mandatory” I am distinguishing between elective courses and required courses, as well as between coursework and stand-alone courses. By “racial literacy”, in the most concise and direct sense, I mean “a dynamic framework for understanding American racism” (Guinier, 2004 p. 114)

that helps people “decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of the [United States]” (Guinier, 2004, p. 100).

Racial literacy, as defined by Lani Guinier (2004) and elaborated on in the field of education by Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz (2011), Sonya Horsford (2011), Jane Bolgatz (2005), Howard Stevenson (2014) and LaGarrett King (2015), is the primary theoretical framework guiding and informing the analysis of this study. Therefore, racial literacy, as a concept, theory, and framework is thoroughly explored in the literature review as the primary focus of chapter two. In the section below, I will present the core concepts and theories I engage/am in conversation with throughout the dissertation, followed by some combination of definition, discussion, and/or stipulation of the intention, context, and/or relevance of its usage here within. In addition to racial literacy; Africana/Black Studies, Antiracism, Antiracist Education, Black Radical Tradition, Critical Race Theory

1.5.1 Africana/Black Studies

In this study, Black Studies, Africana Studies, and African American Studies are three different ways to name the same academic discipline; thus, the terms are used interchangeably. In “Black Studies as an Integral Tradition in African-American Intellectual History”, James Turner—pioneer in Black Studies and founding director of the Africana Studies department at Cornell University in 1969—and co-author, C. Steven McGann, relay the story of the founding of Black Studies in the United States: “Though W.E.B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson are generally considered the founding mentors with the greatest influence on shaping the roots of Black Studies,” Turner and McGann (1980) explain, “it was DuBois who was most preeminent in setting the larger surrounding movement” (p. 52). “As early as 1913,” they continue, “DuBois recognized that the development of what is now known as Black Studies could not be possible under the conditions

then existing nor could any correct interpretation of Black people be done by anyone other than trained Black scholars” (p. 52).

“The young Dr. DuBois, trained in the foremost American and German universities, launched African-American Studies institutionally when he became the director of the ‘Atlanta University Studies Series,’ which documented social and economic analyses of all aspects of Afro-American life” (p. 52). A brief two years later in 1915, Carter G. Woodson “organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) with the following purposes:

- (1) to promote historical research;
- (2) to publish books on Negro life and history;
- (3) to promote the study of the Negro through clubs and schools;
- (4) to bring about harmony between the races by interpreting the one to the other.

The organization has published *The Journal of Negro History* for 60 years” (p. 53).

As DuBois and Woodson are recognized here as the architects and progenitors of Black Studies during the first half of the 20th century, Dolores Aldridge (1994) explained that African American studies is “the intellectual and scholastic offshoot of the Civil Rights movement; and it initiated the first wide scale effort to broaden social perspectives within the University” (p. 1). As a result, Aldridge posited that “African American studies is uniquely positioned to address the diversity issue in America, and by extension” the world (p. 3). Because as the professor of African American Studies at Emory University stated, “The African American experience from slavery, to emancipation, through Jim Crow oppression, civil rights, black nationalism, and all its other economic and political expressions, has clear application to national struggles waged by oppressed peoples elsewhere,” explained Aldridge (1994, p. 3).

“From its inception,” said Maulana Karenga (1982/1992), “Black Studies has had both an academic and social thrust and mission. It grew out of one of the most important, politically active and successful periods of Black history in the U.S.” (p. 17). In *Introduction to Black Studies*—a seminal text in the field often used as a textbook in university courses in Black Studies—Karenga, explained, “Black Studies, as an academic discipline, began as a political demand which had its origin in both the general Student Movement and the social struggles of the 60’s out of which the Student Movement evolved” (p. 17). Known as the “creator of Kwanzaa”, Karenga, a professor of Africana Studies and executive director of the Institute of Pan-African Studies in Los Angeles, presented an extensive discussion on the scope of Black Studies in the Ninth edition of the 1982 text.

Karenga (1992) begins the analysis with a concise and clear and cogent definition of the discipline: “Black Studies is the scientific study of the multidimensional aspects of Black thought and practice in their current and historical unfolding” (p. 33). Karenga described Black Studies as a social science that “has its own particular focus on human relations and behavior” (p. 33); and an interdisciplinary discipline with “seven basic subject areas” or “intradisciplinary foci”: (1) Black History; (2) Black Religion; (3) Black Social Organization; (4) Black Politics; (5) Black Economics; (6) Black Creative Production; and (7) Black Psychology (p. 35). To be sure, this is Karenga’s perspective on the topic. There are others. The accounts of Black Studies herein provided are intended to serve as a general introduction to the field.

1.5.2 Antiracist

In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram Kendi (2019) defines an antiracist in contrast to a racist. In the simplest terms, the former is “one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea” while the latter is “one who is supporting a racist policy through

their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea;” (p. 13). In another chapter, Ibram enhances the description of an antiracist by contrasting it with definitions of assimilationist and segregationist. There, he describes an antiracist as one who expresses the ideas of equality among all racial groups (unlike segregationists or assimilationists) and that no racial group “needs developing” (unlike assimilationists); and who “support policy that reduces racial inequity” (unlike segregationists) (p. 24).

1.5.3 Antiracist Education

Staying with and building on Kendi’s (2019) straightforward definition of antiracist, the logic follows that antiracist education and pedagogy should be education and pedagogy that champions antiracist ideas and policies through critical praxis. To elucidate what this looks like in schools and in practice, the following excerpts from a 1991 *Rethinking Schools* interview with renowned anti-racist educator, Enid Lee, offer several profound insights about antiracist education and pedagogy.

“Anti-racist education is fundamentally a perspective”, said Lee. “It is a point of view that cuts across all subject areas, and addresses the histories and experiences of people who have been left out of the curriculum”, she explained (p. 13). The purpose of antiracist education “is to help us deal equitably with all the cultural and racial differences that you find in the human family. It’s also a perspective that allows us to get at explanations for why things are the way they are in terms of power relationships, in terms of equality issues”, explained Lee (p. 13). “So when I say anti-racist education,” Lee made clear, “I am talking about equipping students, parents, and teachers with the tools needed to combat racism and ethnic discrimination, and to find ways to build a society that includes all people on an equal footing” (p. 14).

Antiracist education “also has to do with how the school is run in terms of who gets to be involved with decisions. It has to do with parents and how their voices are heard or not heard. It has to do with who gets hired in the school”, said Lee (p. 14). To be clear, “There is no neutral ground on this issue”, Lee explained. “If you don’t take multicultural education or anti-racist education seriously, you are actually promoting a monocultural or racist education. (p. 14).

Lee (1991) explained the process of implementing anti-racist education in schools/schooling as having the potential to occur in four stages. The first step is the “surface stage”. The next step is the “transitional stage”. The third stage is “structural change”; and the fourth step is the “social change” stage. The latter two stages resonate with a particular relevance to the course in anti-Black racism and the focus of this dissertation study. Lee (1991) describes the structural change stage as “when you have elements of that unit integrated into existing units. Ultimately, what is at the center of the curriculum gets changed in its prominence” (p. 15). The social change stage Lee (1991) describes as “when the curriculum helps lead to changes outside of the school. We actually go out and change the nature of the community we live in” (p. 15). Lee made it clear that, “What is crucial is the application of anti-racist principles to students’ lives and the wider society. It’s what I call “making the mandated meaningful” (p. 17).

Terry Husband (2016) draws extensively on the scholarship of Julie Kalin’s (2002) *Antiracist Education* to define anti-racist education, as a four-part “approach to education that (1) emphasizes knowledge deconstruction and critique, (2) assumes an overtly political stance, (3) analyzes racial and economic oppression simultaneously, and (4) emphasizes social activism” (p. 10). Antiracist educators see schools and classrooms as “microcosms of a broader racist American society”, and as a result, their work is mainly concerned with “analyzing and critiquing practices, policies, and procedures that transpire in classrooms and schools where racism exists” (ibid).

In the edited volume, *Everyday Antiracism*, the essay: “Making Race Relevant in All-White Classrooms: Using Local History” by Mara Tieken (2008) is especially useful in illustrating what antiracist education looks like in the classroom. Echoing the sentiment articulated by Morrison (1993), but citing the 1993 work of Frankenberg, Tieken writes, “White people may not think about themselves in racial terms; we [whites] often assume that race pertains only to people of color” (p. 200). Tieken’s insights are particularly salient because she writes from her classroom experiences as a “White teacher in an overwhelmingly White school in an almost entirely White town...” (p. 200). “If race is considered irrelevant for White students, addressing it in all-white schools may seem unnecessary. Yet, Tieken writes, all-white schools and all-white towns are racial phenomena” (p. 200).

Tieken (2008) explains how thoroughly segregated civic spaces in the U.S. provide raw, ripe, and real material for teachable moments and pedagogical opportunities about systemic racism, whiteness, and social injustices because the establishment and longevity of such places are typically not so by chance. Rather, they are routinely borne of historical contexts and circumstances riddled with violence, domination, coercion, greed, deceit, and various forms white-western cultural hegemony³ (p. 200). Settler colonialism, manifest destiny, westward expansion, the gold rush and homesteading which displaced, if not destroyed, the Indigenous Nations of [what is now called] North America are among the most obvious examples; as well as 400 years of systematic anti-Black terror in the forms of perpetual slavery, KKK killings, Black Codes, legal

³ Giroux (1981) provides an instructive definition of hegemony via Antonio Gramsci: “[H]egemony refers to the successful attempt of a dominant class to utilize its control over the resources of state and civil society, particularly through the use of the mass media and the educational system, to establish its view of the world as all-inclusive and universal” (p. 23). Giroux’s discussion of Gramsci’s analysis of hegemony continues, but this much suffices for our needs.

lynchings, Jim Crow laws, and redlining (p. 200) which systematically trapped, if not literally imprisoned, the African Americans who escaped racial extermination, to the bottoms and margins of socio-economic existence in the Americas.

Tieken's example is instructive because it demonstrates exactly how white teachers working with white students in white settings can engage their students in racial literacy and practice antiracist pedagogy without having to stretch or conjure any content to do so; as the relevant lessons and teachable moments that are palpable to students are omnipresent, especially to those educators conscientious enough to recognize them.

1.5.4 Anti-Black Racism

When I initially wrote this section in the spring of 2021, the term “anti-Black racism” was undertheorized. That could be because it is a relatively new term to the American English lexicon. It seems likely that anti-Black racism is a term that congealed outside of the academy prior to making its way into the academy, where it appears to have been popularized. This is probable because a search of approximately academic 15 – 20 articles that discuss anti-Black racism unsuccessfully yielded an explicit definition of “anti-Black racism”. This is not to say that a scholarly definition of “anti-Black racism” is unsearchable on the web. It is to say, that all I found towards that effort were phrase length synonyms and descriptions—as opposed to definitions—of anti-Black racism such as “Black suffering” (Dumas & ross, 2016) and “the fulcrum of white supremacy” (Nakagawa, 2012, as quoted in Dumas & ross, 2016) or nouns like “oppression”, “animus”, “disregard” and “violence” preceded by the term “anti-Black”, also from the Dumas and ross (2016)/ text.

I realized I could and should attempt to define anti-Black racism based on my research on the topic. In the simplest terms, anti-Black racism is racism specifically directed against people

who are marked, identified, and designated as “Black”, African American, of African descent, African, Afro-Caribbean, and/or of the African diaspora. Racism is enacted against several people marked, identified, and designated as “non-white” due to their skin color, ethnicity, or culture. Therefore, racism is not specifically and always aimed at people of African descent. When people want to speak specifically about the kinds of racism that are imposed upon people of recent (the last 500 years) African descent, who most often appear non-white, they may employ the term anti-Black racism to make their point clear.

For example, founding director of the Center for Race Research and Justice (at Vanderbilt University) and current president of AERA H. Richard Milner addressed anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism in *The Race Card*—his latest text, released in April of 2023. Drawing on Dumas’ (2016) work on Antiblackness, Milner (2023) summarized the characteristics of anti-Black racism into a cogent list of four actionable offenses. Anti-Black racism, in contrast to racism and whiteness, explained Milner:

- 1) moves racism to an elevated level of hate for the Black body.
- 2) advances deep contempt, harm, and disdain, for Black people, their worldviews, and their practices.
- 3) solidifies violence against the Black body through implicit and deeply ingrained hostility that is practiced and passed down through generational harm.
- 4) intently studies any possible serious gains and improvement of Black communities in order to disrupt, distort, and end them by any means necessary. (p. 8)

Milner’s (2023) comments on anti-Black racism were especially helpful in situating this form of social violence within schooling structures. With conviction, Milner (2023) impeached “school punishment policies...school grading policies and reward systems... school dress code

policies and expectations...school curriculum practices...and school curriculum practices” on charges that all of these structures “are often anti-Black” (p. 7).

1.5.5 Antiblackness

The primary sources for scholarship on Antiblackness appear to be Michael Dumas and Frank Wilderson. As witnessed in the paragraph above, Dumas is one of the main voices to turn to for discussion on antiblackness. “Antiblackness scholarship, so necessarily motivated by the question of Black suffering,” explains Dumas (2016), “interrogates the psychic and material assault on Black flesh, the constant surveillance and mutilation and murder of Black people (Alexander, 1994; Tillet, 2012)” (p. 12). Reaching back to scholarship from Orlando Patterson (1982), Dumas adds that Antiblackness “also grapples with the position of the Black person as socially dead—that is denied humanity and thus ineligible for full citizenship and regard within the polity” (p. 12).

In the next passage, Dumas ties antiblackness to Afro-pessimism—a scholarly project of mainly Wilderson and Sexton. In “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse”, Dumas (2016) writes:

Antiblackness is the central concern and proposition within an intellectual project known as Afro-pessimism. Afro-pessimism theorizes that Black people exist in a structurally antagonistic relationship with humanity. That is, the very technologies and imaginations that allow a social recognition of the humanness of others systematically exclude this possibility for the Black. The Black cannot be human, is not simply an Other but is other than human. Thus, antiblackness does not signify a mere racial conflict that might be resolved through organized political struggle and appeals to the state and to the citizenry for redress. Instead, antiblackness marks an irreconcilability between the Black and any

sense of social or cultural regard. The aim of theorizing antiblackness is not to offer solutions to racial inequality, but to come to a deeper understanding of the Black condition within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence against the Black. (p. 13)

In the brief endnotes of the article, Dumas notes: “In short, it should be understood that there is no singular theory of antiblackness and, as such, no list of tenets or principles that might be said to unify all those who intellectually wrestle with antiblackness” (pp. 17-18).

In her popular 2018 text, *White Fragility*, academic and former professor of multicultural education, Robin DiAngelo devotes a chapter to discuss anti-Blackness. Self-identifying as white, DiAngelo (2018) commenced her analysis of anti-Blackness by introducing it as a “uniquely anti-Black sentiment integral to white identity” (p. 90). “I believe”, explained DiAngelo, “that in the white mind, black people are the ultimate racial “other...” (p. 90). After acknowledging the relentless nature of anti-Black messaging circulating in U.S. culture, DiAngelo (2018) ... “But anti-blackness goes deeper than the negative stereotypes all of us have absorbed; anti-blackness is foundational to our very identities as white people. Whiteness has always been predicated on blackness” (p. 91). Following dozens of scholars before her, DiAngelo concluded that “whiteness has always been predicated on blackness” and “...blackness is essential to the creation of a white identity” (p. 91). Later in the chapter DiAngelo (2018) added: “Copious research attests to the disdain of whites for African Americans, from the school-to-prison pipeline to mass incarceration, to white flight” (p. 92).

In words that corroborate sentiments expressed and implied by Massenberg’s petition and proposal as well as introductory materials from the course in anti-Black racism, DiAngelo agreed: “Anti-blackness is rooted in misinformation, fables, perversions, projections, and lies. It is also rooted in a lack of historical knowledge and an inability or unwillingness to trace the effects of

history into the present” (p. 94). Education in the form of racial literacy can address those sources of anti-Blackness. What DiAngelo added next complicates the diagnosis. “But perhaps most fundamentally,” wrote DiAngelo “anti-[B]lackness comes from deep guilt about what we have done and continue to do; the unbearable knowledge of our complicity with the profound torture of [B]lack people from past to present” (p. 94). Perhaps, this is where antiracism enters. If those folks DiAngelo (2018) described wanted to address said guilt, learning about antiracist ethics and practicing being [an] antiracist is a potential prescription for counteracting the complacency.

1.5.6 Black Radical Tradition

In “Pedagogy, Politics, and Power: Antinomies of the Black Radical Tradition”, chapter one of *Black Protest Thought and Education* (Watkins, 2005), Richards and Lemelle (2005) discussed the views of the late professor and scholar, Cedric Robinson, on the Black Radical Tradition (BRT). Starting with an excerpt from Robinson’s text, *Black Marxism* (1983/2000), Richards and Lemelle (2005) summarized Robinson’s definition of the tradition as “an accumulation of collective intelligence gathered from generations of struggle and resistance to slavery, segregation, and exploitation by ‘racial capitalism’” (p. 5). Because nothing exists in a vacuum, including the United States of America, we must consider the cultural influences and vestiges of African-derived ethos, mythos, ideology, and philosophy on the descendants of Africans in the Americas; those unbreakable souls who survived the Middle Passage—more appropriately called the Maafa. Indeed, while Robinson agreed that the roots of this tradition trace back to the African continent by way of sailing slave dungeons on the Atlantic, he emphasized that it “evolved from New World revolts and maroonage to a more direct critique of the West and colonialism” (p. 5).

Going one step further, Robinson tied this rhetorical turn to the birth of the “Black Radical intelligentsia”, whom he labeled: “a segment of the colonial petty bourgeoisie” and describes their position as a unique one because it “made them ‘internal aliens’ in their own societies” (p. 5). Robinson concluded that the work of those individuals found purpose in the struggles “to overthrow the whole raced based structure” (p. 5). Here, Robinson drew a clear line between the evolution of the Black Radical tradition and the emergence of Black intelligentsia; and in particular, those who were educated (informally and/or formally) but retained a critical lens on the nation’s oppressive and exploitive status quo as well as a wrenching thirst for liberation, justice, and equality.

In “What is the Black in the Black Radical Tradition?”, chapter seven of *Futures of Black Radicalism* (Johnson & Lubin, 2017), George Lipsitz offered a longer version of Cedric Robinson’s definition of the Black Radical Tradition (BRT) from Robinsons’ signature text. In *Black Marxism* (1983/2000), Robinson described the BRT as: “the continuing development of a collective consciousness as informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality” (p. 109). Given this, the Black Radical Tradition can be understood as an ongoing process of a people struggling collectively and conscientiously for the liberation and preservation of all life.

Following Robinson, Lipsitz (2017) wrote, “Thus in many ways, the greatest achievement of the Black community was itself, its emergence as an aggrieved and insurgent polity committed to social justice” (p. 109). With this, Lipsitz paves the way to explain the central argument of the chapter: “The ‘Black’ in the Black Radical Tradition is a politics rather than a pigment, a culture rather than a color” (p. 109). This is the ontological piece that Robinson referenced above, and the ‘ontological Blackness’ that the late, great theologian James H. Cone popularized in his immensely

influential “Black Liberation Theology”. Extending his analysis of Robinson’s scholarship on the BRT, Lipsitz phrased the following insights with a profundity worth preserving intact:

"Robinson’s research reveals that the key building blocks for Black survival, Black humanity, and Black democracy came from the lower rungs of Black society, from the plantations and slave quarters, out of the contradictions of the rural regimes of slavery and debt peonage and the living conditions in ghettos of northern and western cities. Experience taught the Black poor and the Black working class that racial capitalism entailed (quoting Robinson) “an unacceptable standard of human conduct” that they needed to counter with a politics that was inventive rather than imitative, communitarian rather than individualistic, democratic rather than republican, Afro-Christian rather than secular and materialist” (Johnson & Lubin, 2017, p. 109).

Black survival, Black humanity, and Black democracy were much easier idealized and verbalized than actualized amid the catastrophic conditions tied to the capitalocene of the transatlantic slave trade (Maafa) era of the Americas. To attempt it then, “required recognition of a linked fate and the production of practices capable of turning radical divisiveness into radical solidarity”, explained Lipsitz (2017, p. 111). Digging deeper into Robinson’s analysis of the Black Radical Tradition, Lipsitz (2017) uncovered additional layers of the organic struggle that birthed this particular branch of Black Critical Rhetoric. “Robinson argues,” explained Lipsitz,

The Black Radical Tradition in fact emerged from a split in the community: on one side ‘a liberal bourgeoisie consciousness’ that was ‘packed with capitalist ambitions and individualist intuitions,’ a stance that sought access to the roles and rewards monopolized by whites, and on the other a radical proletarian consciousness that sought to realize a

higher moral standard than the one embraced by whites and the Black imitators (2017), (p. 111).

The Black Radical Tradition is “needed now more than ever before”, Lipsitz declared (p. 119). Because, in the words of Robinson (1983/(2003): “a civilization maddened by its own perverse assumptions and contradictions is loose in the world. A Black radical tradition formed in opposition to that civilization and conscious of itself is one part of the solution” (2017, p. 119).

1.5.7 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory is a framework that provides people with the tools to think deeply and analytically about the many and various forms of structural oppression; and especially those forms of oppression that can be traced back to white supremacy, male dominance, and western-heteronormative cultural hegemony. I think introducing pre-service and in-service educators to CRT as part of a systematic effort to enhance their critical analysis skills, and then to encourage them to use it (their new knowledge of CRT tools) in their lesson planning, instructional pedagogy and curriculum development practices is a good way to advance the aforementioned mission of making critical and social justice discourse as a norm in schools.

The six basic tenets of CRT are: (1) racism is ordinary, normal science; (2) interest convergence or material determinism; (3) race and races are social constructions, products of social thought and relations [and definitely not scientific]; (4) differential racialization; (5) intersectionality and anti-essentialism; (6) unique voice of color/voice-of-color thesis (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Additionally, CRT highlights central themes including: whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), racial realism, revisionist history, critique of liberalism, structural determinism, and encompasses the practices of “storytelling” and creating and valuing “counternarratives” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

The themes of racial realism and whiteness as property are particularly pertinent to this study, as are tenets one, four and six. Tenet one makes clear that racism is “not aberrational, [but] the usual way society does business, the common everyday experience of most people of color in this country” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) and supports the theme of “racial realism”. Tenet four refers to the phenomenon of how different minority groups can be—and have been—racialized by the majoritarian power structure at different times throughout history to satisfy/serve various [insidious] economic, political, or social ends (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Tenet six “holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression,” writers and thinkers from minority and oppressed groups can inform their white counterparts about important life and death matters about which the latter is ignorant (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). “Minority status brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism” (p. 10).

Whiteness as property examines and critiques the ways in which whiteness functions as a form of ownership, real estate, social capital, and privilege imbued an array of concrete and consequential material access, domination, and exploitation (Harris, 1993). Like pieces of a puzzle or clues to a mystery, all of the above factor into why the course was called for; why race/racism is a legitimate topic of scholarly and systematic investigation; and why it matters that the course content was developed and delivered by mostly “Black and Brown” faculty.

1.5.8 Racial Literacy

Racial Literacy expands human comprehension of the ways in which race, racism, racialized violence and systemic racism function in western civilization and under whiteness by highlighting, emphasizing and “redefining (1) racism as a structural problem rather than a purely individual one” (Guinier, 2003, p. 202); (2) “race as an instrument of social, geographic, and economic control of both whites and blacks” (2004, p. 114); and (3) “race in the [U.S. as] a by-

product of economic conflict that has been converted into a tool of division and distraction (2004, p. 99). Lani Guinier (2004), the founding mother of racial literacy, defines it in these three ways. Racial literacy is “contextual rather than universal” in the ways it addresses problems and approaches solutions. It thinks not in terms of cookie-cutter solutions and it requires the “engagement between action and thought, between experimentation and feedback” (Guinier, 2004, pp. 114-115). Secondly, it “emphasizes the relationship between race and power” analyzing race “in its psychological, interpersonal and structural dimensions” (p. 115). Thirdly, racial literacy “does not focus exclusively on race. It constantly interrogates the dynamic relationship among race, class, geography, gender, and other explanatory variables (p. 115).

1.6 Conclusion

Taken together, all the terms defined above contribute important themes and relevant entry points into this dissertation study. In the next chapter, I conduct a review of the scholarly literature associated with the relatively nascent concept of “racial literacy”, inceptively theorized in writings by Law Professors, Lani Guinier (d.2022) and Gerald Torres published in 2002. That being the case, and this being 2022, means that this year marks the 20th anniversary of *racial literacy*. Twenty years presents an opportune time to review the “scholarly life”—the intellectual conception and progression—of racial literacy in the academy.

2.0 Chapter II: A Review of Literature

Racial Literacy in Education: Towards a 20-Year Retrospective

“At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a racially literate mobilization of people within and across lines of race, class, and geography might finally be what it takes...”

Lani Guinier (2004 p. 118).

2.1 Introduction

This social prognosis, offered by one of the most astute and profound legal minds of the last four decades, is an apt and apposite quote to invoke and underscore the relevance of this study and the timing of the advent of PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance. As the previous chapter began to show, I associate both of these phenomena—the creation of the course and the function/potential of the course—with racial literacy (RL) and what Guinier describes in the epigraph as “a racially literate mobilization within and across lines of race, class, and geography...”. In this study, the ABRC represents [the potential or the vision of] a socially responsible and racially literate mobilization of educational resources and political capital across socioeconomic and geographic spaces.

2.1.1 A Candle for Carol

Guinier’s quote was timestamped in 2004. Sixteen years later during the double-pandemic of 2020, a course in racial literacy was called for and the course in ant-Black racism was born. By January of 2021, this dissertation centering racial literacy and tracking a particular attempt at “racially literacy mobilization” commenced. Then, within the rapid passage of 12 months—exactly one year and one day after the “January 6th Riot” on the U.S. Capitol—racial literacy lost its chief

architect and herald. On the first Friday of 2022, which fell on the 7th, the second-generation Harvard College graduate, wife, mom, champion civil-rights, NAACP attorney turned venerable Harvard law professor, Carol Lani Guinier, exhaled for the final time. At the age of 71, Guinier's body capitulated to the Alzheimer's disease with which she'd been living for years.

I opened this chapter with, and dedicated this space to the new ancestor, Carol Lani Guinier, because as her pioneering *scholactivism* (scholarship + activism) has demonstrated, she is the *mother* and chief architect of “racial literacy” in a United States context. Guinier theorized racial literacy and formulated a dynamic framework that has remained one of the two pillars upon which racial literacy was erected. Guinierian racial literacy is the core theoretical framework guiding and informing my analysis in this study. In this chapter, I review the literature between 2002 and 2021 on racial literacy to examine what is known about contours and characteristics of the concept, in general, and particularly how it has been defined and theorized in the field of educational research.

2.1.2 Rationale for the Retrospective

The literature review is organized and presented in a fashion that may be considered unique or unorthodox with regard to common practice. I deliberately imposed a historical framework to situate and contextualize the literature into a kind of metanarrative capable of summarizing the evolution of “racial literacy” from inception to current times. In 2022, Racial Literacy turned 20—in terms of years of being *alive* in academic discourse within the United States. Twenty years of paper-trails—or receipts, in current parlance—is a popular and predictable milestone to entertain various types of retrospective projects for useful reasons that can be explained in either logical or cultural terms. Suffice to say, when I considered that, 1) this is one of only a few dissertation studies conducted on racial literacy; 2) it was mostly written between 2021 and 2022 during the 20th anniversary of RL in the U.S., and 3) one of the mothers of racial literacy perished at the close

of that 20-year cycle in January of 2022; the weight of these factors reinforced the apperception to use this systematic literature review as an opportunity to attempt a 20-year retrospective of racial literacy.

To be clear, 2022 marked the beginning, of the twenty-first calendar year for racial literacy discourse. Thus, a retrospective of the first 20 years of RL would cover the calendar years of 2002 to 2021. The objectives set for this retrospective literature review were to 1) chronicle with accuracy the history of the evolution of the racial literacy framework within academic research; and 2) convey with integrity, whom the contributors were and the nature of their contributions to the scholarly conversations “under construction” within the racial literacy arena over the first 20 years. After reviewing the body of literature as a whole, and thinking within the frame of a retrospective format, I recognized three waves or stages that defined the discourse of racial literacy in its first two decades. It became apparent to me how the [still-] evolving narrative arc could be presented in *three acts*. With this in mind, I constructed three categorical stages that could meet both the meta/narrative aims of a thoughtful retrospective and the standards of a systematic literature review.

2.1.3 An RL Origin Story

This *origin story* of racial literacy—as a concept, theory, and framework—is comparable to the distinct yet similar ways in which the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers flow in the same direction along banks on opposite sides of the mountain ranges of southwest Pennsylvania and carve naturally symmetrical waterways through the Appalachian terrain before effortlessly overlapping into one aquatic body at Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh. A massive fountain situated at the apex of a manicured, pyramidal greenspace dubbed the “Golden Triangle” marks

the spot—the point of unity—where these two mighty tributaries empty into one [riverbed] and originate the great Ohio River.

In a parallel fashion, during a tiny window of time at the turn of the millennium (1999-2004), two pioneering scholars in two different academic disciplines researching in two distant locations—one in New England, out of Cambridge, Massachusetts and the other in England, near the University of Cambridge—working independent of each other, and perhaps unaware of each other’s workflow towards a common nexus, ultimately arrived at a similar conceptual destination: “racial literacy”. This nearly identical, intellectual inclination describes the conceptual space where the analyses and theories of law professor, Lani Guinier, and sociologist, France Winddance Twine converged and commenced a new *thread* in the ongoing discourse on race, racism, and anti-Blackness. This seasoned, labyrinthine discourse had recently been reanimated and nuanced by a generation of critical race scholars and knowledge production in Critical Race Theory and Black Studies throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Navigating these currents, both Guinier and Twine channeled into a common reservoir their uniquely inspired and innovative scholarship on [anti-Black] racism (systematic, structural, historical, and individualized) and strategies to resist and redress it on various levels and in various ways.

To be sure, just as the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio rivers retain their distinct features as three separate bodies with the exception of one space where they integrate as one, the same can be said of Guinier, Twine, and Racial Literacy. While there is a definitive, unified body of literature defining racial literacy, there are definitively *Guinierian* and *Twinian* forms, types, schools, and/or applications of racial literacy. However, the affinity between the two strands is so self-evident that most, if not all, scholars publishing on racial literacy routinely cite both Twine and Guinier. This may be so because the resonance between the two is far more vivid than their

points of departure. As I would describe it, the shared heartbeat of racial literacy pumps with concern for cultivating actionable knowledge of the complex dimensions and manifestations of racism and anti-Blackness; and advancing awareness of/access to racially literate strategies and racially-specific resources for developing and implementing policies and practices that are affirming, antiracist, justice/equity-centered, and/or liberatory. It is from this central and mutually valued vicinity, that the *river system* of racial literacy begins to flow into an array of scholarly streams and academic distributaries. Which components, or combination of components, are prioritized, and the degree to which they are emphasized, depends on the scholar, the school of thought, and/or the context of the subject/object being considered. Yet, there is a common lineage and central fountain to which scholars of racial literacy pay homage and draw inspiration.

2.1.4 Three Stages of Racial Literacy

The following two sections delve into and re-present key contributions to the literature on racial literacy produced by Guinier and Twine. These two sections comprise the first stage of three that define this chronological retrospective of racial literacy from 2002 to January 7, 2022. Due to its exclusive focus on the chief architects of racial literacy [in the academy and as a theoretical framework], “Stage One” has been framed as the *groundbreaking phase* which commenced in 1999 and extended to 2004.

What I propose as “Stage Two” of racial literacy knowledge production is presented in section III of this literature review. Encapsulated from 2005 to 2014, the second stage has been designated the *developmental phase* as it features the first wave of scholars who embraced, explored, and produced research on racial literacy after it was introduced and theorized by Guinier and Twine. A cadre of scholars including: Bolgatz, Brown, Douglass Horsford, Rogers and Mosley, Sealey-Ruiz, and Stevenson—all of which were working and/or writing in educational

research and faculty in schools of education in R-1/AAU universities—were the earliest adopters of RL as well as the innovators of RL by customizing it for and applying it specifically to schooling and educational contexts. These work of these scholars pushed racial literacy into a third wave/phase.

“Stage Three” of the racial literacy scholarship is described and explored in section IV of this chapter. This stage is positioned parallel to and contextualized within the national climate of the era during which it occurred. For the purposes that serve the metanarrative of this retrospective literature review, the period between 2014 and 2021 has been dubbed the *BLM-JEDI phase* (Black Lives Matter--Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion). During these years, the BLM movement exponentially expanded in the social sphere (mainstream society). As a result, within academia, there was a surge in demands from students and faculty for increased commitments to JEDI concerns. Some of these organized demands and actions translated into a significant uptick in formal gesturing towards and some increased hiring in [what is traditionally called] DEI- [but when you add justice to it and arrange it in order of progressive priorities/values/aims, it becomes JEDI] related positions at universities (Ferguson, 2017; Patel, 2021).

This groundswell of indignation, contempt, and critical outcry against blatant and persistent anti-Blackness in policing and jurisprudence that fueled widespread mobilizations and catapulted popular interest in staying “woke” and being “[an] antiracist” also spurred a surge of scholarly attentiveness to systemic and structural racism, racialized violence, mass incarceration, racial justice, racial equity, antiracism, and Critical Race Theory. Racial literacy, after 12 years of multi-disciplinary theorizing, was presciently prepared and in a paramount position to provide the complex, conceptual infrastructure, scholarly currency, and intellectual space for thinkers to address these relevant topics. The next wave of racial literacy literature was set in motion by an

ever-growing group of scholars comprised of too many names to list in this section. Yet, their contributions are the focus of section four (IV), which has been labeled the *proliferation phase*.

2.2 Stage One – Racial Literacy Foundations: 1999-2004

2.2.1 (A) Guinierian Racial Literacy (Law & Social Policy)

Similar to the intellectual genealogy of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Racial Literacy (RL) first emerged from the mind of a legal scholar, writing in the field of Critical Legal Studies. In 2003, Harvard law professor, Lani Guinier, argued that “universities need to become racially literate”, particularly in the execution of their admission policies, processes, and procedures. “A racially literate institution uses race as a diagnostic device, an analytic tool, and an instrument of process,” Guinier (2003) explained (p. 201). University admissions officers need to deepen their apprehension of the roles/implications of race, especially within the racialized context of the United States; while at the same time, bolstering “public confidence in their admissions practices” (p. 201). Guinier (2003) contended that race is an effective device to diagnose the “underlying problems affecting higher education” (p. 202). In ways that other indices do not, “Race reveals the ways in which demography is often destiny—not just for people of color, but for working-class and poor whites as well. Race constantly influences access to public resources, while also revealing the influence of class and geographical variables” (p. 202).

These logics set the stage for Guinier (2003) to articulate more concretely the capacity and labor she intended for the concept of racial literacy to perform. “Racial literacy begins by redefining racism as a structural problem rather than a purely individual one,” Guinier explains (p. 202). By re-centering the structural and systemic faces of racism into the foreground of the analytic frame, Guinier figures, “racial literacy continuously links the underrepresentation of [B]lack and Latinos to the underrepresentation of poor people generally” (p. 202).

In some sense, this 112-page article published in the *Harvard Law Review*, can be read as Guinier holding court. She is the prosecutor, and the defendants are institutions of higher learning. The offense in question is situated in the admissions offices of [elite] universities and demonstrated through their ongoing practices of misguided/shortsighted colorblind recruitment tactics. Guinier sought to remind the ‘guilty parties’ of their accountability to the public [good]. In her words, Guinier (2003) “reminds public institutions of higher learning that the ‘idea of access is deeply embedded in [their] genetic code’ and thus, the underrepresentation of certain demographic groups illuminates their failure to fulfill their public responsibilities” (p. 202).

Guinier (2003) not only equipped and employed the analytic tool of racial literacy to call out the malpractice of university admissions offices. Rather, under the keen scrutiny of racial literacy, the government is also culpable; and likewise, faces indictment. Racial literacy witnesses “the decline in government investment in higher education, along with the accompanying justificatory rhetoric of individual responsibility and individual ‘desert,’ as deeply problematic” (p. 203). Describing/defining racial literacy as if it were a conscious, reflexive entity, Guinier (2003) explained that this sentient concept or conceptual tool has already concluded that “admitting a more diverse class of students not only benefits individual students, but is also necessary to realize the social function and values of higher education, including democratic access, equal opportunity, and public service” (p. 203). If the culpable parties in this scenario (university admissions officers and practices in tandem with discretionary federal funding streams) would embrace and acquire racial literacy, it would (1) enlighten and update their understandings of the positive correlation between racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity to/and human development in university settings; and (2) assist them in actualizing their idealized and implicit—if not explicitly stated—responsibility, to function for public good.

To be clear, Guinier (2003) conceived and theorized racial literacy as a “diagnostic or evidentiary device” (p. 203) and an “analytic tool” (p. 204). Guinier understands that in a racialized society such as the United States of America, race can be positively utilized as a type of homing device that “helps identify the underlying problems affecting higher education” (p. 203). One of those problems is the notion of merit and how it is deployed unevenly across US society and within the American public imaginary. It is widely acknowledged that the US social structure perceives, portrays, and promotes US society as a true meritocracy—a nation that prioritizes merit/ability over race, class, gender and any other human quality, condition, and social location. This national mythos and meta-narrative is widely-perpetuated, both willfully and unwittingly, and uncritically accepted despite the fact that it is a wholly, false narrative. This collapse between micro-American realities and the macro-American narrative is the kind of breakage that racial literacy, as an analytic tool, has the capacity to address. When utilized in a case such as this, Guinier (2003) explains that “racial literacy locates the emerging debate on the dynamic nature of merit within an explicitly democratic and future-oriented context;” and supplies to “institutions a way to rethink merit in the context of public service and as a forward-looking rather than backward-looking project” (p. 204-05).

Beyond its function as a diagnostic device, evidentiary apparatus, and analytic tool, racial literacy is an instrument of process. According to Guinier (2003), “Racial literacy also has a process dimension that uses race to guide participatory problem solving and accountability” (p. 207). Racial Literacy advances what would be denoted in today’s idiom, an explicitly antiracist position: “In order to change the way race is understood, race has to be directly addressed rather than ignored” (Guinier, p, 207). To that point, addressing race directly is what Guinier continued to do. The very next year, in 2004, the legal scholar published a second article on racial literacy in

The Journal of American History. This article pollinated and elucidated the concept in the public discourse and extended it beyond the readership of law journals. More about this pivotal article will be discussed after the following discussion.

2.2.1.1 Is There Ever “Only One”? – Other Pioneers in RL Scholarship

In keeping with the narrative interests and chronological framework of this retrospective account of Racial Literacy, it is opportune to mention the following facts. During this same 2003 to 2004 time period in which Guinier was writing, speaking, and advancing the concept of RL in the United States, France Winddance Twine, an anthropology-trained ethnographer, and sociology professor, had published three articles on racial literacy as well. The earliest mention of racial literacy in contemporary academic scholarship was in an article authored by France Winddance Twine in 1999. In this article, Twine mentioned “racial literacy” three times. In 2003, Twine published a little-known and difficult to access article entitled: “Racial Literacy in Britain: Antiracist Projects, Black Children, White Parents.”⁴ In 2004, Twine followed with: “A White Side of Black Britain: The Concept of Racial Literacy.” As indicated by the titles of these publications, Twine’s brand of racial literacy was notably distinct from Guinier’s.

To say a bit about that now, Twine’s use of racial literacy focused on interracial families and in particular, how white parents could enhance their capacity to raise their Black children through a set of practices—a type of parenting literacy especially relevant for non-Black parents

⁴ This article is listed in Twine’s CV and cited in Stevenson’s (2014) book, yet I was unsuccessful in accessing any portion or trace of the article via the vast array of databases available to me through the University Library System, in addition to the largest search engines: Google and Google Scholar. Even the journal—which is long defunct after only two or three volumes/years—cannot be fully accessed. A few of the articles from the second volume of the journal are listed in the archives of a few Universities, but the content for those articles appears inaccessible to the public. Volume One, Issue 2, which contains the Twine article is not listed.

of Black/mixed-race children of African descent. Perhaps informed by her work as an ethnographer, Twine's theorizing and application of racial literacy places a greater focus on racialized phenomena occurring in a microsphere on an individualized and small group basis. While there are certainly spaces of overlap, Twine's approach to racial literacy is decidedly discrete from Guinier's legalistic and systemic analysis, diagnosis and application of racial literacy which lends greater focus on the macro, without losing sight of the micro.

As Guinier (2003) explained, "Race in the United States is a by-product of economic conflict that has been converted into a tool of division and distraction. It is not just an outgrowth of hatred or ill will" (p. 99). However, in ways comparable to Twine, Guinier (2003) recognized that "racism has had psychological, sociological, and economic consequences that created the separate spheres inhabited by blacks and whites" (p. 99). As Guinier's racial literacy is more directly associated with the structural and policy concerns in education, her brand of racial literacy is deemed to be more relevant to the research questions this dissertation study pursues. However, this literature review, which seeks to provide a reliable retrospective account of the first 20 years of racial literacy, discusses Twine's scholarship in racial literacy at length.

Still, Twine was not the only *other* scholarly voice invested in advancing this burgeoning conversation on cultivating racial awareness and exploring its relationship to antiracist practices. Back across the pond in Nashville, Tennessee, yet during the same year of 2003, H. Richard Milner, a first-year assistant professor of education at Vanderbilt University published a paper in *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* entitled, "Reflection, Racial Competence, and Critical Pedagogy: How Do We Prepare Pre-service Teachers to Pose Tough Questions?" This article was an important catch because it did not emerge in the primary search designed to exclusively identify

literature explicitly addressing “racial literacy”. However, “competence” is a synonym of “literacy”, particularly in the context of *racial* competence and *racial* literacy (emphasis added).

As a result of discovering Milner’s 2003 article on “racial competence”, it became clear that although Milner (2003) did not use the explicit term “racial literacy”, his piece on “racial competence” was contributing to a parallel discourse. To be more specific, Milner (2003) was not only contributing to it, he was pioneering it, along with Guinier (2002, 2003, 2004) and Twine (2003, 2004). As the only one of the three positioned in a school of education, it appears Milner was among the earliest, if not the first, in the field of education to publish on this topic; albeit with a slight twist on the terminology. Like most of the educational researchers who would eventually publish articles on racial literacy starting in 2006, Milner (2003) focused his concerns on how acquiring and increasing racial competence in pre-service teachers would better prepare them to serve the racially diverse students they would inevitably encounter in rapidly increasing numbers in US public schools.

2.2.1.2 Digging Deeper – Bibliographic Roots

Here, between 2003 and 2004, is where most scholars who conduct studies and publish on racial literacy trace their bibliographical roots. With remarkable consistency, scholars of racial literacy in education research cite some combination of Guinier’s 2003 and/or 2004 article(s) or Twine’s 2003 and/or 2004 article(s). In only a couple of instances (Winans, 2010; Stevenson, 2014) were Twine’s 2006 article with Steinbugler (“The Gap Between whites and whiteness: Interracial Intimacy and Racial Literacy”) and 2011 book (*A White Side of Black Britain: Interracial intimacy and racial literacy*) cited. Yet, very few, if any at all, cite Guinier’s 2002 book with Gerald Torres, *The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting race, resisting power, transforming democracy*, in which she first articulates and discusses “racial literacy” in a publication (to my

knowledge)—albeit briefly. Guinier and Torres (2002) mentioned “racial literacy” a total of four times through-out their book: three times in-text and once in the endnotes. Why some scholars do not cite this source may have something to do with the fact that Guinier and Torres (2002) did not explicitly introduce and define the term. Rather, they used it matter-of-factly; as a part of their normal language.

For instance, in the first two mentions of racial literacy (pp. 29, 31), Guinier and Torres (2002) described a racialized situation/scenario in the entire paragraph preceding their use of “racial literacy.” Then, they begin the first line of the next paragraph with “This kind of racial literacy would...” (p. 29). Then two pages later: “This new racial literacy should...” (p. 31). The authors followed these auxiliary verbs (would/should) with commentary that helps the reader infer what is meant by racial literacy. For example, on page 29, the rest of the sentence—after “racial literacy would”—reads: “reach beyond the initial descriptive step of an oppositional consciousness to identify patterns of injustice that link race to class, to gender and to other forms of power.” This is at least a clue, if not a clear explanation of what racial literacy entails—taking a deeper dive into and performing more complex analyses of the implications of being “raced” as Black and enduring racialized treatment in the US.

To be sure, the preceding paragraphs are instrumental to the reader’s full comprehension of what Guinier and Torres (2002) are intending by the term. This is especially true in the second example (p. 31) in which the authors are discussing the need for a more nuanced response to “hierarchies of power” by coalitions comprised of communities of color, working class communities and women’s groups that start with race and center it, even after class and gender are incorporated into the collective agenda. “For a progressive cross-racial coalition to emerge, whites need to engage with race, and blacks need to engage with a more inclusive vision of social justice,”

explain Guinier and Torres (2002, p. 31). “Both types of engagement require a different understanding of the meaning of race and its relationships to power” (p. 31). After this discussion, the authors start the next paragraph with: “This new racial literacy should be flexible enough to apply to different contexts without forcing everyone’s experiences into a single explanatory narrative” (p. 31). As evidenced, the reader has to engage the text beyond the optical level to define what the authors mean by “racial literacy.”

The third and final in-text use of racial literacy in *The Miner’s Canary*, is even more inconspicuous than the first two. On page 298, in the middle of a paragraph, Guinier and Torres (2002) write: “Yet few progressive activists have pursued our mostly preliminary effort to reintroduce gender into the discussion of racial literacy and political action.” If the reader does not know what the authors mean by “racial literacy”, this sentence would not change that. However, the fourth and final mention of the term does the explanatory labor that the first three do not. On page 370, in the endnotes for Chapter 8, entry number 97—which is not an endnote for “racial literacy”, but rather “racism”—states: “Racial literacy teaches us that racism is not simply a function of individual psychology, prejudice, or bigotry. Indeed, well-meaning individuals can acquiesce in social racism and most do.”

2.2.1.3 Racial Literacy, Critical Race Theory, and Interest Divergence

In 2004, Guinier published an article that more explicitly and deliberately discussed the concept of racial literacy than did her two prior publications under review. Whereas the 2003 article, “Admissions rituals as political acts: Guardians at the gates of our democratic ideals” dealt directly with concerns around racially discriminatory, conveniently colorblind, and fiscally conservative admissions practices, policies, and funding tied to higher education and the federal government. Guinier’s 2004 piece, “From racial liberalism to racial literacy: *Brown v. Board of*

Education and the interest-divergence dilemma” was critical to fleshing out the skeletal structure she introduced and designated as “racial literacy” in 2002 and 2003.

In her 2004 article, Guinier positioned herself to thought-lead her audiences away from the proverbial weeds of racial liberalism into the clear pastures of racial literacy. “To address the full range of racialized inequities in this country, racial justice advocates need to move beyond the early tenets of racial liberalism to treat the disease and not just its symptoms,” implored Guinier (2004). “A first step would be to make legible racism's ever-shifting yet ever-present structure” (p. 100). The overgrown weeds of racial liberalism have ways of camouflaging root causes and consequences of problematic policies advanced by a racial liberalism agenda. In contrast to racial liberalism, Guinier (2004) explained: “Racial literacy, requires us to rethink race as an instrument of social, geographic, and economic control of both whites and blacks. Racial literacy offers a more dynamic framework for understanding American racism” (p. 114).

By all accounts, the pathway Guinier (2004) was paving had been substantially cleared by this time. Her persistent plowing for justice and antiracist policies in courtrooms as a counselor for the NAACP-LDEF, in classrooms as a law professor—the first woman of color to gain a tenured professorship at Harvard Law School, and in the halls of Congress as a nominee for U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights had positioned Guinier as one of the nation’s leading legal scholars in Civil Rights, Affirmative Action, and antiracism litigation. To her works, add those of Derrick Bell, Alan David Freeman, and Richard Delgado—her colleagues of color in Civil Rights law and Critical Legal Studies who forged Critical Race Theory (CRT) during the preceding two decades. Amongst these names and many others, Guinier is recognized as an important voice in the CRT canon (see Crenshaw, et al., 1995) with respect to her 1992 article, “Groups, Representation, and Race-Conscious Districting: A Case of the Emperor’s Clothes”. As both an

inheritor and contributor within the CRT lineage, Guinier's (2004) move to engage and reconceptualize the pivotal and now classic 1980 article by Derrick Bell: "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma" into her 2004 article: "From racial liberalism to racial literacy: Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma" was a mission possible for only a select few.

In large part, because of his groundbreaking 1980 article, Bell is directly associated with interest convergence in particular, Critical Race Theory in general, and expert legal analysis on *Brown v. Board* and Civil Rights Law. Inspired by Bell's ideas and analysis in all of these areas, Guinier (2004) invoked his "Brown v. Board" article and Interest Convergence theory as a launching pad and point of departure to introduce two of her own theories. "Racism is a structural phenomenon," Guinier (2004) explained, "that fabricates interdependent yet paradoxical relationships between race, class, and geography—what I am calling the interest-divergence dilemma" (p. 100). That was the first one. As for the second theory, Guinier added: "It is the interest-divergence dilemma that requires a new racial literacy, meaning the capacity to decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of our republic" (p. 100). With her frameworks of interest divergence and racial literacy now at the forefront of her reader's minds, Guinier (2004) offered, "To understand why *Brown v. Board of Education* has not lived up to its promise, I propose a paradigm shift from racial liberalism to racial literacy" (p. 100).

As interesting as her work is on interest divergence, the latter, in and of itself, is not a component of racial literacy. Rather, it is a theory Guinier (2004) used to explain and demonstrate how racial literacy is/can be applied to read, interpret, and respond to systemic, complex, and sophisticated forms of racism more critically, perceptively, and strategically. "The oppressive

conditions that most blacks still confront must not be ignored,” declared Guinier (2004), “but the continuing puzzle is how to address the complex ways race adapts its syntax to mask class and code geography” (p. 100). Thus, this paper will not delve into Guinier’s theory of interest divergence beyond the following passages, which provide rich descriptions of this theory in relationship to racial literacy. “The first step in understanding these diverging interests is to make them legible” explained Guinier (2004, p. 114). This is where racial literacy is key, and serves as a key. The key function of racial literacy as an analytic tool is to increase the legibility of racism by “deciphering the dynamic interplay among race, class, and geography” (p. 114). Here is where Guinier (2004) makes another distinction between racial literacy and racial liberalism. Only the former “reads race as epiphenomenal” (p. 114).

Those most advantaged by the status quo have historically manipulated race to order social, economic, and political relations to their benefit. Then and now, race is used to manufacture both convergences and divergences of interest that track class and geographic divisions. The racialized hierarchies that result reinforce divergences of interest among and between groups with varying social status and privilege, which the ideology of white supremacy converts into rationales for the status quo. Racism normalizes these racialized hierarchies; it diverts attention from the unequal distribution of resources and power they perpetuate. Using race as a decoy offers short-term psychological advantages to poor and working-class whites, but it also masks how much poor whites have in common with poor blacks and other people of color. (p. 114)

The majority of Guinier’s (2004) article is focused on making the case for ‘interest divergence’, yet, at various points throughout the article, she offers more clarity and descriptive language on racial literacy and how it contrasts with racial liberalism. Guinier (2004) admits “there

are many differences between” the two but focuses on three in the article. “First, racial literacy is contextual rather than universal,” explains Guinier (2004), “it does not assume that either the problem or the solution is one-size-fits-all” (p. 114).

Nor does it assume that the answer is made evident by thoughtful consideration or expert judgment alone. Racial literacy depends upon the engagement between action and thought, between experimentation and feedback, between bottom-up and top-down initiatives, it is about teaming rather than knowing. Racial literacy is an interactive process in which race functions as a tool of diagnosis, feedback, and assessment. (p. 114)

The second distinction Guinier (2004) makes between racial liberalism and racial literacy is that the latter “emphasizes the relationship between race and power” (p. 115). Expounding on this point, Guinier (2004) continues: “Racial literacy reads race in its psychological, interpersonal, and structural dimensions. It acknowledges the importance of individual agency but refuses to lose sight of institutional and environmental forces that both shape and reflect that agency” (p. 115). Clearly, racial literacy is much less superficial and naïve, and much more measured and sober in the face of racism because “it sees little to celebrate when formal equality is claimed within a racialized hierarchy” (p. 115).

The third difference detailed by Guinier (2004) has to do with the idea that “while racial literacy never loses sight of race, it does not focus exclusively on race” (p. 115). Racial literacy “constantly interrogates the dynamic relationship among race, class, geography, gender, and other explanatory variables” she continued. “It sees the danger of basing a strategy for monumental social change on assumptions about individual prejudice and individual victims” (Guinier, 2004, p. 115). Furthermore, racial literacy takes into account the ways in which “psychological interests can mask political and economic interests for poor and working-class whites. It analyzes the

psychological economy of white racial solidarity for poor and working-class whites and blacks,” (p. 115). And does so in ways that consider yet transcend their subjection to the “manipulations of [bosses], lawyers, and politicians who served them,” explained Guinier (2004). “Racial literacy suggests that racialized hierarchies mirror the distribution of power and resources in the society more generally” (p. 115).

Guinier’s (2004) final words on racial literacy in this particular article clearly and succinctly recapitulated the central proposition at the core of in this innovative thought-piece. “If we can become more literate about the role racism continues to play in structuring and narrating economic and political opportunity,” said Guinier (2004), “we may be better able to combine legal and legislative advocacy that enlists support among people of all colors, whites as well as blacks” (p. 117). In tone, if not in terminology, these particular sentiments from Guinier (2004) harmonize effortlessly with Twine’s (2003, 2004) brand of racial literacy, discussed next

2.2.2 (B) Twinian Racial Literacy (Anthropology & Sociology)

France Winddance Twine needs to be mentioned in perhaps all scholarship about racial literacy because, as mentioned above, she was one of the two pioneering thinkers who coined, defined, and introduced the term to the public sphere. It is uncanny how both Guinier and Twine were developing this concept around the same time yet, independent of each other. This apparent coincidence—in the truest sense of the word—has happened numerous times throughout the known history of people and primates. Sometimes, theorists (e.g., C.G. Jung) on this matter refer to the notions of the collective unconscious and synchronicity, as possible explanations. That aside, Twine’s scholarship on racial literacy is not in the lane of educational research, narrowly defined. Twinian RL is more aligned with the disciplines of sociology and cultural anthropology—the disciplines in which she trained as a doctoral student and advances as a professor.

Twine's first publication involving racial literacy was a rarely mentioned (only Touré & Thompson-Dorsey, 2018) journal article from 1999, entitled: "Bearing Blackness in Britain: The Meaning of Racial Difference for White Birth Mothers of African-Descent Children." In this article, Twine mentions "racially literate" once, and racial literacy three times—twice in two subheadings and once in the text where she simply mentions it as a synonymous term alongside racial consciousness. Like Guinier's first writing on racial literacy in her 2002 text with Torres, Twine did not theorize racially literacy. Rather, she used it operationally as a part of a larger thought. The most direct language we get about the concept is when she described some of her informants as "conscious of and informed about multiple forms of racism" and "educated in this arena" (p. 198). That was Twine's initial framing of racial literacy.

Twine's follow up article on racial literacy, "Racial Literacy in Britain: Antiracist Projects, Black Children, White Parents," was published in 2003. As mentioned in the footnote on page 60, it could not be accessed due to the apparent obscurity and premature demise of *Contours: A Journal of the African Diaspora*—the short-lived journal in which it was published. Not even the article's abstract could be retrieved. However, we have the words of Howard Stevenson (2014) to rely on as a surrogate. When Twine initially defined racial literacy in 2003, it was based on her extensive ethnographic research on multiracial families in Britain. She observed, investigated, and described a discrete set of practices utilized by white (Anglo/European descended) parents of Black and bi-racial (African/Caribbean/American descended) children—a phenomenon known as "transracial parenting"—aimed at helping their children "identify racism in ideologies, semiotics, and practices as well as to use the knowledge and strategies to combat racism" (Stevenson, p. 20). Twine's (2003) racial literacy also involved these transracial parents making available to their

Black children the kind of resources that “may increase their positive connection to Black legacies, people, and history” such as art, toys, books, and music (Stevenson, 2014, p. 20).

2.2.2.1 Twine’s Three Practices of Racial Literacy

In her 2004 publication: “A white side of black Britain: The concept of racial literacy”, France Winddance Twine built on her 2003 article by discussing the findings of her seven-year ethnographic study of white transracial birth parents that involved interviews with 102 members of Black-white interracial families in England. In this article, Twine (2004) identified, described, and analyzed three practices of “white transracial birth parents that attempt to cultivate ‘black’ identities in their children of multiracial heritage.” (p. 879). It is the concept of racial literacy which Twine (2004) articulated and found most useful “to theorize their parental labour as a type of anti-racist project that remains under the radar of conventional sociological analyses of racism and anti-racist social movements” (p. 879). Twine (2004) explained that these racial literacy practices, when taken together, “constitute one dimension... of racial literacy,” in that they “provide children of African Caribbean ancestry with resources that assist them in countering everyday racism” (p. 882). The three practices that Twine (2004) discusses are as follows:

The first practice is described as “the provision of conceptual tools at home” used by transracial parents “to prepare their children of African Caribbean heritage to respond to racism” (p. 884).) This practice was observed in about 25 percent of the white parents Twine (2004) interviewed; and she reported that these parents also “described a number of discursive practices in which they trained their children to discuss, and critically evaluate media and textual representations of [B]lack people” (p. 884). In the 2007 text: *Critical Literacy: Context, Research, and Practice in the K-12 Classroom* by Stevens and Bean describe and define these types of practices as contemporary and socially relevant forms of critical literacy and critical media literacy

that help audiences conduct meaning-making processes as they simultaneously engage in “reading the word and the world” (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Twine adds: “The discussion and evaluation of their child’s experiences with ‘race’ was a social practice that was central to transmitting analytical skills and comprises one dimension of racial literacy “(p. 885). In essence, the first practice of Twine’s framework of racial literacy involved the encouragement of critical thinking at home to cultivate analytical skills that prepared these racially and culturally minoritized students to respond to the anti-Black racism confronting them in the world.

The second practice is described as: “Providing children with access to privileged cultural knowledge and social relationships with black adults and children,” (p. 889). Twine (2004) offered the examples of white, transracial parents prioritizing the effort and resources to locate and enroll their adolescent children in “supplementary schools run by [B]lacks or [B]lack-run after-school clubs” which create opportunities for their children to “socially integrate” and establish “Black friendship networks” (p. 889). Social integration, friendships, relationships, and creating a sense of belonging are the key interests and aims in this second practice of racial literacy Twine (2004) observed. “This strategy is concerned with a dimension of racial literacy that differs from the discursive practices,” explained Twine, “because it provides social experiences that enhance self-esteem and integrate children into [B]lack social networks (p. 889).

The third approach is called “aesthetic and consumption practices” (p. 892) and concerns the careful curation and intentional integration of tangible phenomena into the home environment that stimulate creative and cultural sensibilities. Twine (2004) described this practice as what happened when white, transracial parents “carefully searched for and selected black-produced art, material objects, music, toys, and symbols because they believed that this would enhance their child’s self-esteem and facilitate their positive identification with {B]lack diasporic communities”

(p. 893). In this sense, racial literacy practices involved an awareness of and commitment to the benefits of providing, if not surrounding, children—especially those living in racially-minoritized communities—with culturally relevant and sustaining intel. Twine (2004) described features of the aesthetic and consumptive practices she witnessed in the homes of her informants for this strategy: “Their home interiors constituted a specific form of racial socialization that provided children with a symbolic and visual culture that promoted an identification with African-descent peoples and [B]lack struggles” (p. 889).

Ultimately, Twine’s (2004) study is aimed at illuminating the “intergenerational transfer of racial literacy from white parents to their children of second-generation African-Caribbean ancestry” (p. 901). This representative minority of transracial parents appear to be committed to assisting “their children’s acquisition of a ‘[B]lack’ identity” (p. 901). As Twine (2004) stated, to accomplish this “is an achievement that requires parents to transfer particular racial literacy skills and forms of knowledge” (p. 901). One of the primary contributions of Twine’s (2004) study to the racial literacy discourse is that it “provides an empirical case in which white parents counter white supremacy by socializing their children to strongly affiliate themselves with black communities” (p. 901). Furthermore, Twine (2004) stated her “aim is to build upon earlier interdisciplinary work on racism and anti-racism in black studies and whiteness studies by providing...

a micro-cultural empirical analysis of the ‘labour’ that white parents perform as they translate and transform the meaning of whiteness, blackness, and racism in their families of reproduction. I do this by examining parental practices designed to teach their children to strongly identify with [B]lack people and assist them in coping with racial hierarchies. While building upon these earlier studies my research shifts the focus to the quotidian

practices of transracial parents and their efforts to counter racial hierarchies that privilege individuals of European ancestry. (p. 881)

2.2.2.2 Twine's Six-Part Definition of Racial Literacy

In 2011, Twine published *A White Side of Black Britain: The Concept of racial literacy*, a book sharing the same name as her 2004 article. In it, Twine provides an updated, six-part definition of racial literacy. In her critically curated words, racial literacy advances:

(1) the definition of racism as a contemporary problem rather than a historical legacy; (2) an understanding of the ways that experiences of racism and racialization are mediated by class, gender inequality, and heterosexuality; (3) a recognition of the cultural and symbolic value of whiteness; (4) an understanding of racial identities are learned and an outcome of social practices; (5) the possession of a racial grammar and vocabulary to discuss race, racism, and antiracism, and (6) the ability to interpret racial codes and racialized practices. (p. 92)

While a Guinierian leaning lens would question the use of “rather” in the first tenet—in favor of, perhaps, a “both/ and” claim—and maybe feel compelled to complicate or unpack the logics of the fourth tenet; the rest of the Twine’s (2011) six-part conceptual framework of racial literacy corresponds symbiotically with Guinier’s (2004) framework. The key distinction, in my assessment, between the Guinierian and Twinian schools of racial literacy is articulated by a phrase Twine (2004) composed in a quote presented above: “micro-cultural empirical analysis.” While a Twinian approach to racial literacy leads with micro and cultural analyses, a Guinierian approach to racial literacy centralizes macro and structural analyses.

Guinier’s (2003, 2004) scholarship on racial literacy certainly could be counted as educational research, if the argument had to be made; because she specifically focused her analysis

on issues directly related to the field of education. In 2003, the issue Guinier addressed was school admissions policies and practices, as well as educational funding. In 2004, the focal point was on school desegregation vis-à-vis *Brown vs. Board of Education*. However, as a law professor and legal scholar, Guinier's articles were published in journals of jurisprudence rather than journals of education. As a sociologist and ethnographer, Twine's (2003, 2004) scholarship on racial literacy was published in a [short-lived] journal of Africana studies (2003) and a journal on race and ethnic studies (2004). The following section introduces the next set of scholars who took up the racial literacy banner and churned out a host of journal articles and a few books.

2.3 Stage Two – Racial Literacy Development: 2005-2014

Racial Literacy in Educational Research-The Early Adopters and Innovators

To be sure, Guinier's and Twine's research offered valuable and relevant contributions to educational research, in addition to the fact that both are university professors—and thus, educators—their fields of expertise and disciplines of practice are distinct from the field and discipline of education research. By 2005, the first published scholarship on racial literacy in classrooms/schools appeared in a book by Bolgatz. By 2006, the first journal articles by education researchers exploring racial literacy in educational contexts began to surface. Rebecca Rogers and Melissa Mosley emerged as prolific voices in racial literacy in education research contributing frequently published scholarship between 2006 and 2011. During the years since 2011, the innovative scholarship in racial literacy of Sonya Douglass Horsford, Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Keffrelyn Brown, and Howard Stevenson elevated these four professors to the vanguard of the *racial literacy in education* discourse. Relative to the 20-year history of racial literacy in academic research, these seven scholars, plus a few others discussed later, represent the early adopters and innovators during the second wave, circa 2005 to 2014.

In service of increasing awareness and transparency, it is honest to take into account the notoriously prolonged process of publishing cycles in academic book and journal presses and the possibility that research on many of these publications began up to two years prior to their release dates. This suggests that those works published in 2005 and 2006 were likely in development as early as 2003-04. Twine introduced the term racial literacy in the U.K. context in 1999 and defined it in her 2003 article. Guinier introduced the term racial literacy in the U.S. context in 2002 and defined in it her 2003 and 2004 publications. It also important to acknowledge and track the economic inequities, labor disparities, and social capital dynamics persisting between AAU member or “research one/R-1” universities and universities such as HBCUs, HSIs, and local-serving institutions which facilitate and produce lop-sided representation in the academic publishing arena, as is evident in the following collection of articles and books under review.

2.3.1 2005: The Bolgatz Paradox

In 2005, Teachers College Press published what is likely the first book on racial literacy. *Talking Race in the Classroom* by Jane Bolgatz, a former high school social studies and language arts teacher turned assistant professor at Fordham University, does not have ‘racial literacy’ in the title but RL is the central theme of the text. The first chapter of the book is entitled: “Racial Literacy: Talking even when the “smooth-sounding words fail us”. The seventh and final chapter is entitled: “Cultivating Racial Literacy in Our Schools.” These two chapters which address RL by name bookend a case study in a high school classroom and a multi-faceted discussion of race, racism, and race talk in school settings, and utilizes racial literacy as a through line.

What is perhaps most intriguing about the Bolgatz (2005) text, particularly in the context of this retrospective literature review of racial literacy, is that the author researched, wrote, and published an entire book on racial literacy without mentioning Lani Guinier or Frances Winddance

Twine, let alone citing their work. Neither of the names of the founders of racial literacy were found in the book, including the index or the references sections of the book. Being that the Bolgatz (2005) text was discovered towards the conclusion of my review of the literature—in which every single author cited Guinier (2002, 2003, 2004) and/or Twine (1999, 2003, 2004)—I found myself in a temporary state of optical disbelief and cognitive dissonance. I could not reason how this occurred. Is it possible that Bolgatz found racial literacy without ever engaging with Guinier's (2003, 2003, 2004) and Twine's (1999, 2003, 2004) scholarship on racial literacy? It is also possible Bolgatz was writing her text as the Twine and Guinier text were being published.

A next intriguing notion concerning this text is that I found an unlikely interlocutor in Bolgatz (2005). In reading the book, I realized Bolgatz (2005) was concerned with a number of the same ideas this dissertation is exploring. A most obvious example is the title of the final chapter in the Bolgatz (2005) text: "Cultivating Racial Literacy in Our Schools" and the final line in the subtitle of this dissertation: "Cultivating Racial Literacy and Antiracist Ethics." Clearly, we are participants in the same conversation within the larger racial literacy discourse. Another important shared feature between these two studies is the general profile of the cases. Bolgatz (2005) studied conversations on race and racism in a classroom of high school upperclassmen supervised by teachers prepared for the work the exercises entailed. This dissertation studied a course on race, racism, and antiracism taken by first-year college students; not far-removed from upperclassmen in high school. These similarities between our work were glaring, and not merely superficial.

I was both pleasantly startled and intellectually puzzled by two different parts of the following passage from the Bolgatz (2005) text: "Just as students need to be literate in the traditional ways—able to read, write, and compute—they also need to be what *I call racially literate*: able to talk with people in order to understand and address racially loaded controversies"

(emphasis added, p. 1). It was like a writer's version of déjà vu that swept over me when I read these words because it took me back to lines I wrote in the introduction of this dissertation that said social literacy is as relevant as alphanumeric literacy and that racial literacy is a form of social literacy. On page two, Bolgatz (2005) wrote: "We develop racial literacy socially." As I see it, Bolgatz (2005) and I essentially made the same claim (minus the phrase in italics), yet I did not cite Bolgatz because I was not familiar with her or work at the time I articulated those ideas on paper. This scenario trails into the part of this passage which perplexed me.

Returning to the phrase in italics, Bolgatz (2005) boldly staked her claim in the academic real estate of racial literacy by choosing the passive-possessive linguistic framework "I call...", followed by "racially literate", and absent of citations. In plain view, or so it seemed, Bolgatz (2005) seized ownership of coining the term "racially literate" and offering a conceptual framework for racial literacy. Skipping over the works of Twine and Guinier circa 2002 to 2004, Bolgatz (2005) leapt twenty years into the past and invoked *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* by Hirsch (1987) to declare that in contrast to her predecessor who "called for students to develop 'cultural literacy' so that they might individually thrive in the world as it is. *I call* (emphasis added) for teachers and students to develop *racial literacy* (emphasis added) so that we might collectively improve our civic society" (p. 1). Did Bolgatz intellectually arrive at "racial literacy" without prior knowledge of it already being in academic circulation? Is that why she took the position of intellectual ownership of the term "racially literate" and prime minister of the racial literacy conceptual framework? It is possible... yet a perplexing puzzle.

Following her call for racial literacy, Bolgatz (2005) offered what she imagined racial literacy to be and what it entailed. "Racial literacy is a set of competencies. Being racially literate means being able to interact with others to challenge undemocratic practices" Bolgatz (2005)

explained. “Racially literate students are willing to break the taboos of talking about race” (pp. 1-2). After imputing some additional and questionable characteristics onto “racially literate students” such as possessing the capacity to “hear and appreciate diverse and unfamiliar experiences”, being “genuine”, recognizing their lack of knowledge and “they know how to ask questions”, Bolgatz (2005) adds: “Cultivating racial literacy takes courage” (p. 2). Curiously, Bolgatz quotes Winston Churchill to echo her point on courage.

Before concluding her brief introduction of her conceptualization of “racial literacy”, Bolgatz (2005) warned: “Racial literacy is not simply a matter of speaking and listening, however.” Then, in language sounding closer to the streams of racial literacy defined by Guinier (2002, 2003, 2004) and Twine (2003, 2004), Bolgatz (2005) explained: “One must view racial issues through a critical lens that attends to current and institutional aspects of racism. Racially literate students understand that various forms of racism have developed historically and that they can contest these practices” (P. 2). Following her words this time, Bolgatz (2005) quoted an entire passage from Cornel West (1993) to sustain the message of developing “civic-minded consciousness” she attempted to impart in her explanation of racial literacy.

The title of the Bolgatz (2005) text aptly captured the focus of the core chapters (3 -7). For classroom educators, *Talking Race in the Classroom* provides a guide, through example and analysis, of literally *how-to* engage in constructive conversations on race and racism in classrooms and schools. In this category, Bolgatz joined an academic discourse which had commenced several decades prior to her work. During the era current to her publication (1993 – 2005) this conversation was bubbling with the scholarly voices of James Banks, Bonilla-Silva, Lisa Delpit, bell hooks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Alice McIntyre, Rich Milner, Sonia Nieto, Christine Sleeter, Beverly Tatum, Cornel West, and others. The particular contribution the Bolgatz (2005) text made, building

on the broad tide of attention triggered by Tatum's (1997) book, was demonstrating how teachers can recognize or create opportunities for race talk, introduce racial topics, respond to characterizations of race and racism, and manage the social dynamics of the classroom during these conversations. Then she opened and closed the demonstration with explanations and discussions on racial literacy. That was the most unique offering to the discourse [on race talk in schools] amongst education researchers and educators.

2.3.2 2006-2008: RL in Literacy Research and Teacher Education

Between 2006 and 2015, Rebecca Rogers and Melissa Mosley published at least five articles on racial literacy. To keep in step with the historical arch of this retrospective review of racial literacy, these articles will be discussed at various parts of this section on *Stage Two*, according to the chronological order in which they were published. As education scholars with a focus on critical literacy Rogers and Mosley have used racial literacy as a point of entry and a point of departure to distinguish their research amongst their colleagues. As early as May of 2005, Rogers and Mosley submitted the original version of their first article: "Racial Literacy in a Second-Grade Classroom: Critical Race Theory, Whiteness Studies, and Literacy Research" published in the *Reading Research Quarterly*. In it, Rogers and Mosley (2006) addressed what they identified as a "pervasive silence in literacy research around matters of race, especially with both young people and white people" (p. 463). They approached this by demonstrating, through critical discourse analysis paired with insights from critical race theory and whiteness studies, that "young white children can and do talk about race, racism, and antiracism within the context of the literacy curriculum"; and that this is a form of racial-literacy development, and a practice that "must be guided" (p. 461).

In 2008, the duo of Rogers and Mosley returned with: “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Racial Literacy in Teacher Education”, published in *Linguistics and Education: An International Research Journal*. As the title suggests, the focus of their research this time around, was placed on racial literacy development in teacher education spaces. Building on Guinierian (2004) racial literacy, which they affiliate with Critical Race Theory, and Twinian (2004) racial literacy, which they affiliate with Whiteness Studies, Rogers and Mosley (2008) used critical discourse analysis to examine how members of a teacher education literacy methods course book club—designed “with children’s literature that included White people grappling with race, racism, and anti-racism”—embodied and negotiated racial literacy discourse (p. 108). In the process of analyzing the study’s findings, Rogers and Mosley (2008) “developed a set of semiotic tools [the researchers] refer to as racial literacy” (p. 107). As “semiotic” refers to the study of signs and symbols and how they are used and interpreted, what the authors referred to as “semiotic tools” were the gestures, expressions, eye contact, posture, motions, and other forms of “multimodal resources” they observed in the book club participants.

Rogers and Mosley (2008) tracked, analyzed, and coded these multiple visual and linguistic “modes” and the “shifts” the participants exhibited during the group discussions on racial literacy and anti-racist actions in the children’s literature. “Such shifts, we argue, hold the potential for a more intricate form of racial literacy” declared Rogers and Mosley (2008) in the abstract of the article (p. 107). In the conclusion of the article, the authors described what their “more intricate form” of racial literacy entailed. Yet, in order to grasp the more intricate form of something, it is necessary to be familiar with the original form; which in this case is a composite of the Guinierian and Twinian forms of racial literacy.

Rogers and Mosley (2008) offered cogent interpretations of both racial literacy architects. Take for example the following excerpt from an entire paragraph devoted to summarizing Guinier's (2004) explanation of racial literacy: "Guinier (2004) names racial literacy as an interactive process in which the framework of race is used as a lens to explore social and legal practices, explicating the relationship between race and power, and examining mitigating variables such as gender, class, and geography" (Rogers & Mosley, 2008, p. 108). Before transitioning to the next paragraph designated to Twine's (2004) take on racial literacy, Rogers and Mosley (2008) juxtaposed Twine's (2004) racial literacy as being located at the individual level, rather than at the institutional level like Guinier's (2004). Starting with Twine's (2004) words, Rogers and Mosley (2008) relay that "Twine (2004) defines racial literacy as a set of "micro-cultural social processes" that facilitate/employ "a micro-cultural empirical analysis of the 'labour' that White parents perform as they translate and transform the meaning of whiteness, blackness, and racism in their families of reproduction" (p. 109). Concluding in their own words, Rogers and Mosley (2008) explained the significance of Twine's (2004) work on racial literacy for teacher education: "Thus, her conceptualization of racial literacy involves a set of social practices which can be taught and learned and also includes a positive theorization of whiteness which includes anti-racist practices" (p. 109).

With this collection of explanations in mind, representing the original form and foundation of racial literacy, Rogers and Mosley's (2008) "more intricate form of racial literacy" can be presented in better context. "Thus, our analysis leads us to a reconstructed framework for racial literacy," explained Rogers and Mosley, "one that includes perspectives from both critical race theory and whiteness studies. We return to our earlier discussion, drawing on Guinier (2004) and Twine (2004), but add to their definitions the role of action" (p. 126). To be clear, "the role of

action” is what Rogers and Mosley (2008) said they added to Guinier’s (2004) and Twine’s (2004) definitions of racial literacy. Rogers and Mosley (2008) explained:

Racial literacy involves a set of tools (psychological, conceptual, discursive, material) which individuals use to describe, interpret, explain, and act on the constellation of practices (e.g. historical, economic, psychological, interactional) that comprise racism and anti-racism. Actions include a broad array of elements. (p. 128)

The authors (2008) continued with a list of ways in which racially literate and antiracist “actions” can be taken. Ultimately, Rogers and Mosley (2008) argued that the “slight shifts in discursive patterns” that occur during intentional interactions of constructive race talk, particularly those that take place in teaching and learning settings, “might signal a shift in learning” and thus “hold implications” for “mental, discursive, and material action” (p. 127). This proposition is what Rogers and Mosley (2008) offered to racial literacy.

2.3.3 2010: Different Shades of Racial Literacy Here and Abroad

The Britain-based, academic journal, *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, consistently appeared as one of the primary sources for research on racial literacy, and perhaps the only journal that has published on this topic several times in the last 10 years. Starting with a 2010 piece by (U.S. based) Melissa Mosley—this time as a single author—the journal published: “‘That Really Hit Me Hard’: Moving beyond Passive Anti-Racism to Engage with Critical Race Literacy Pedagogy.” This third article on racial literacy by Mosley (2010) brought elements from the prior two studies she did with Rogers to discuss a composite concept called, “critical race literacy pedagogy.” This term, she used to describe the combination of professional and personal antiracist practices of teachers—white ones in particular. Mosley (2010) looked at the complexities of the process of a pre-service

teacher in constructing racial literacy and an antiracist identity through professional engagement with students and other pre-service teachers.

In the same year, the Toronto, Canada-based journal, *Curriculum Inquiry*, published an article by Amy Winans entitled: “Cultivating Racial Literacy in White, Segregated Settings: Emotions as Site of Ethical Engagement and Inquiry”. Winans (2010) used content from the writings of first-year students enrolled in a composition class at a racially segregated, rural college in the United States, to explore how white students approach racial literacy. Winans’ findings emphasized the “importance of understanding how emotions inform and propel students’ responses to the ethical challenge of racial literacy” (p. 475). Winans adduces both Twine (2006) and Guinier (2004) in her article. Yet, unlike most of the other literature reviewed, Winans (2010) cites a 2006 article published by Twine and Steinbuglar, entitled: “The Gap between Whites and Whiteness: Interracial Intimacy and Racial Literacy”. This 2006 article expands the design in Twine’s ethnographic study—discussed in her 2003 and 2004 articles—from 102 participants in the United Kingdom, to 121 interracial families on both sides of ‘the pond’—the eastern United States to be specific—and included 20 gay and lesbian families.

Across the pond, but this time in a southerly direction, evidence of the transatlantic relevance of racial literacy emerged from Brazil. In 2010, education professor, Ana Canen, at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, published “Teaching Racial Literacy: Challenges and Contributions of Multiculturalism” in the *Policy Futures in Education* journal. Canen’s (2010) article offered a unique contribution to the literature on racial literacy, and not solely because it was the first and perhaps one of only two articles that explicitly addressed racial literacy within a Brazilian context between 2001 and 2021—Da Costa (2016) being the other. Canen (2010) is especially significant because it illuminated a major milestone in a national policy move to require

schools in Brazil to include Black African history and culture in the curriculum. This is certainly the kind of educational policy this dissertation imagines would be beneficial in U.S school as well. Canen's (2010) article on racial literacy employed "a 'critical post-colonial multicultural perspective' and 'whiteness studies' to examine the impacts and challenges" of enacting this recent, nationwide, educational law intended to fight racism in education (p. 548).

2.3.4 2011: The Tipping Point – Racial Literacy Begins to Trend

The year 2011 was a breakout year for scholarship on racial literacy in education research. Several scholars from a variety of subfields had taken an interest in racial literacy over the previous years and their empirical and theoretical research was beginning to hit the press. The usual voices like Mosley and Rogers along with a whole new slate of bright voices emerged. Enter the racial literacy scholarship of Sonya Douglass Horsford, Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Keffrelyn Brown, and Allison Skerrett.

2.3.4.1 Mosley & Rogers: RL Cultivation in Pre-Service Teachers

Continuing their consistent contributions to the literature on racial literacy, Mosley & Rogers returned with another publication. It appears their mutual research interests in critical literacy learning and teaching supported their joint scholarship in racial literacy acquisition in [white] teachers and students. Their third article together on racial literacy: "Inhabiting the "Tragic Gap": Pre-Service Teachers Practicing Racial Literacy" was published in 2011 in the journal, *Teaching Education*. Mosley & Rogers (2011) returned to the theme explored in their 2008 article and Mosley's 2010 article: a case-study of racial literacy acquisition by white pre-service teachers through their participation in book club discussions of children's literature. In this article, the authors focused their inquiry on the discursive tools used by three, white preservice teachers when race, racism and antiracism arose within the discourse. "Our analysis illustrates that the

participants held two questions,” Mosley & Rogers (2011) explained, “what constitutes racism and what makes a person a White ally, without firm resolution in the form and function of their talk” (p. 303). The authors employed theoretical perspectives from racial literacy and multicultural discourses in addition to “positive discourse analysis”—a form of critical discourse analysis—to interpret the data. The findings of the study suggested that for these white, pre-service teachers, “racial literacy involves what teachers say and also a willingness to stand in the space of indeterminacy, which may create space for new social positions” (p. 303). Here, the racial literacy cultivation is focused on pre-service educators.

2.3.4.2 Skerrett: RL Cultivation in Literacy Research and Instruction

Building on previously published work by Rogers and Mosley (2006) on racial literacy in K-12 literacy research, Allison Skerrett, conducted a study on “English teachers' racial literacy knowledge and practice” which was published in *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*. Skerrett (2011) joined the small band of educators championing the claim and cause concerned with incorporating racial literacy into literacy education. In the first two sentences of the article, Skerrett (2011) cited Rogers and Mosley (2006) in one instance and then quoted their position that “literacy education in schools must address race, racism, and anti-racism...to prepare students to participate in U.S. democracy” (Skerrett, p. 313; p. 465 in Rogers & Mosley, 2006). By leading off in this way, Skerrett (2011) made clear the concerns and conversations this article was intended to forefront. The angle from which Skerrett (2011) approached the topic was via a study of “secondary English teachers in two racially diverse schools—one in Massachusetts, USA, the other in Ontario, Canada—[and how they] described their knowledge of and practices for teaching about race and racism” (p. 313).

In this article, Skerrett (2011) evaluated “the extent and quality of teachers’ racial literacy knowledge and practice” by examining it within the context of extant literature on racial literacy, early (pre-2011) conceptions and benchmarks of racial literacy instruction, and the burgeoning ideas of anti-racist education (p. 313). Ultimately, Skerrett identified three approaches to racial literacy instruction: “apprehensive and authorized; incidental and ill-informed; and sustained and strategic” (p. 318). The majority of the paper explored and explained these three approaches, but in six parts, as Skerrett (2011) treated each pair as two discrete entities. This study contributed significantly to literature on racial literacy, and in particular, to RL instruction, and how teachers’ knowledge and skills can be enhanced through content and professional development.

2.3.4.3 Brown: RL Cultivation in Teacher Education and Instruction

In the same year (2011), another voice emerged in the discourse on racial literacy in education; that of Keffrelyn D. Brown. Brown’s (2011) “Breaking the Cycle of Sisyphean: Social Education and the Acquisition of Critical Sociocultural Knowledge About Race and Racism in the United States”—published in the journal, *The Social Studies*—joins Milner’s (2003) as the only two articles in this literature review that do not contain the term “racial literacy” in the title. In this article, Brown (2011) used a powerful combination of extant concepts, including racial literacy, to describe and ground her research. The first line of the article confirmed its place in this literature review as it announced: “Using Lani Guinier’s notion of ‘racial literacy’ and the findings from a study that analyzed how recent K-12 social studies textbooks portray racial violence against African Americans,” (Brown, 2011, p. 249). The central interest Brown (2011) examined in this article is illuminated in the following quote: “Helping students at the K-12 and college/university levels, including those planning to become classroom teachers, to understand the role that race and

racism has played in US social relations is difficult primarily because of misconceptions they hold” (p. 250).

Like Rogers and Mosley (2006, 2008, 2010, 2011) and Sealey-Ruiz (2011b) Brown’s (2011) research interest in this study was on preservice teachers and teacher education programs; and the need for a proactive ideological and curricular stance in terms of increasing levels of racial literacy among future educators. “Among the sociocultural factors taught in the context of schooling and teaching, race is often positioned as one of the most difficult for students to comprehend,” Brown (2011) explained. Beyond whatever tendencies towards resistance that may be operating in [white] preservice teachers when it comes to confronting/engaging race in teacher education courses, Brown (2011) shines the high beams on the other usual suspects like “silence, apathy, or direct challenge” that are often the real-world hurdles responsible for “the limited historical knowledge they hold about the topic” (p. 252).

In step with her colleagues mentioned above, Brown’s (2011) concerns and research interests in racial literacy were specifically devoted to the teacher education realm. Within this realm, Brown’s (2011) thinking on racial literacy in teacher education extended into various levels of the education sphere. “It is for certain that all K - 12 students, whether they aspire to become teachers or not, need to possess racial literacy and would benefit from a K -12 schooling experience that critically engages race and racism in social education,” (Brown, 2011, p. 253). Tapping into a similar thought emphasized in Skerrett’s (2011) paper concerning the relationship of racial literacy to a demographically diverse, democratic society, Brown (2011) highlighted the notion that the knowledge gained through racial literacy is critical in “preparing children and youth to understand what it means to live and contribute to a multicultural democracy” (p. 253). The relationship between the two is clear as Brown (2011) explained: “Possessing racial literacy would require that

students recognized the virulent history of racism that has alternately, and at different moments in time, denied or dismissed the social political rights of all its citizenry” (p. 253).

Further bridging her key terms for this article: “social education”, “racial literacy”, and “critical sociocultural knowledge about race and racism in the U.S.”, Brown (2011) offered that she “agrees with Jonathan R. Davis (2007) who posits that high school social studies classrooms provide the ideal space for students to explore race and issues related to racial identity” (p. 253). Brown (2011) also proposed that “elementary and middle grades social studies classrooms can address these concerns, particularly in light of research that shows the positive learning outcomes that elementary-aged students gain when instructed directly about historical racism (Hughes, Bigler, and Levy 2007)” (p. 253). Later, Brown (2011) added that “supplementing textbooks with nonfiction and fiction books that focus on the specific study of racism at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels provides additional resources that students can engage with to acquire critical literacy” (p. 253). As an example, Brown (2011) pointed to Ntozake Shange’s (1997) picture book entitled, *Whitewash*, a text she described as narrating a “real life contemporary incident of racial violence experienced by a young boy and girl of color” (p. 253). “Although the challenge still exists to help students understand the institutionalized nature of racism,” explained Brown (2011), “these materials provide additional support and examples that teachers can incorporate in the classroom” (p. 253).

In conclusion, Brown (2011) argued: “To address the knowledge gaps that teacher candidates hold about racism, teacher education programs must offer students the coursework and experience needed to lay the foundation for ongoing learning” (p. 253). Brown allowed that, “while most courses in the teacher education programs that teach about race and racism address a wide body of sociocultural knowledge related to schooling and teaching, these courses must also address

the way racism structures opportunities in social relations in US society at schools” (p. 253). “Such a course,” continued, Brown (2011) “would also need to help students understand the relationship between macro and micro level instantiations of racism.” Furthermore, she added, “this would include reflecting on how race and racism has operated in one’s life and schooling (Milner, 2003), as well as recognizing that what may seem like individual acts of racism, are in fact, historical, structural, and institutionalized in nature” (p. 253). Brown’s (2011) article on cultivating racial literacy in education contributed an important and nuanced perspective to the literature on racial literacy in teacher education.

In addition to the four scholars so far discussed, there was another scholar who was researching, writing, and publishing articles on racial literacy in teacher education and literacy instruction during the same time period.

2.3.4.4 Sealey-Ruiz: Cultivating RL in Students and Teacher Education

In her first article on racial literacy in 2011, “Learning to Talk and Write about Race: Developing Racial Literacy in a College English Classroom”, published in *The English Quarterly of The Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts*, Sealey-Ruiz (2011a) discussed the data gathered from a semester-long study she conducted on the development of racial literacy skills by students in a first-year English and composition course she led at a community college.

In the context of this study, Sealey-Ruiz (2011a)—looking at Guinier (2004), Twine (2003), Johnson (2009), and Bolgatz (2005)—defined racial literacy as “a skill and practice in which students probe the existence of racism, and examine the effects of race and other social constructs and institutionalized systems which affect their lived experiences and representation in U.S. society” (p. 25). Sealey-Ruiz (2011a) identified certain indicators that would inform or suggest that the students were developing racial literacy skills. “Students with racial literacy are

able to discuss the implications of race and American racism in edifying and constructive ways” explained Sealey-Ruiz (2011a, p. 25). Additionally, racial literacy skill development can/should look different for those who are subjected to racial and ethnic oppression and marginalization than for those who are racially and/or ethnically identified as members of the privileged, normalized, and power/resource-hording group. Echoing Guinier and Twine, Sealey-Ruiz (2011) explained that a “desired outcome of racial literacy in an outwardly racist society like America is for members of the dominant racial category to adopt an anti-racist stance, and for persons of color to resist a victim stance” (p. 25).

The second contribution Sealey-Ruiz made in 2011 to the literature on racial literacy in education was a scholarly commentary arguing for the importance of racial literacy to be taught in teacher education programs. The central theme highlighted the potential of racial literacy to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. In a concise piece published in the *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* entitled: “Dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline through racial literacy development in teacher education”, Sealey-Ruiz (2011b) posited that “teacher education programs which emphasize racial literacy development understand that school improvements can only come from fundamental shifts in educators’ understanding of the effect racially biased attitudes and systems have on social and academic outcomes for Black students” (p. 117). Sealey-Ruiz (2011b) proceeded to offer a powerful statement on the merits of racial literacy and how it can be incorporated into teacher education programs to address the kinds of racial inequities and biases that perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline. Sealey-Ruiz (2011b, p. 118) articulated the vision in such a thoughtful way that it begs to be presented in its original form.

Developing racial literacy requires educators to consider race as a major factor in inequitable systems present in schools (i.e. prison-pipeline, achievement gaps) in the

United States. Racial literacy in teacher education calls for self-reflection and moral, political, and cultural decisions about how teachers can be catalysts for societal change—first by learning about systems of injustice and then explicitly teaching their students what they have learned through the use of dialogue, critical texts, journaling, and helping to develop their critical thinking and conversation skills around the topics of racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Last, racial literacy asks that teachers take action against injustice in their school settings once they recognize it. Racial literacy requires familiarity with unconscious bias and unintentional racism (Moule, 2003), microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007), and structural racism (Kubisch, 2006). A teacher education program that fosters racial literacy must provide spaces for teachers to talk about their fears and uncertainties in embracing this type of pedagogy.

To be sure, “racial literacy in teacher education promotes deep self-examination,” says Sealey-Ruiz (2011). However, it does not stop with the intellectual gymnastics and ideological reorganization, racial literacy also “requires actions that can lead to sustainable social justice and educational equity for all students,” (p. 118). And in the context of the article, Sealey-Ruiz chooses to add, “and Black students in particular” (p. 118). In these two articles, Sealey-Ruiz (2011a, 2011b) offers her interpretations of racial literacy as both a critical awareness that post-secondary students can cultivate in classrooms and a competency educators can learn to better serve their students, improve school climates/environments, and engage in antiracist pedagogy.

2.3.4.5 Douglass (Horsford): RL Cultivation for Education Leaders

It would be reasonable to presume that Sonya Douglass Horsford was writing *Learning in a Burning House: Educational Inequality, Ideology, and (dis)Integration* (Teachers College Press) at least a year or two prior to its arrival on bookstands in 2011. In the sixth and final chapter of the

book, “On Becoming Firefighters: Our moral activist duty to equal education”, Douglass Horsford discusses racial literacy. In the section designated to racial literacy, she addressed it in two distinct ways that both make a significant contribution to the literature. The first way Douglass Horsford (2011) discussed racial literacy was by situating it as the first step in a four-step process she called a “Critical Race Approach To Equal Education” (CRATEE) and described as a “multistep progression of racial consciousness and praxis that includes” (1) racial literacy, (2) racial realism, (3) racial reconstruction, and (4) racial reconciliation. Douglass Horsford (2011) cited a long list of scholars who developed the literature in the sub-field of critical race theory in education, e.g. Ladson-Billings, Tate, Solórzano, Yosso, as significant sources for her own thinking and subsequent development of this framework. Additionally, Douglass Horsford (2011) credited Bonilla-Silva’s popular 2006 text, *Racism without Racists*; Guinier’s (2004) theory of racial literacy; Derrick Bell’s theory of racial realism; and *The Price of Racial Reconciliation* by Ronald Walters (2008) for the CRATEE framework, which she explained as follows:

Racial literacy is the ability to understand what race is, why it is, and how it is used to reproduce inequality and oppression. Racial realism is drawn from critical race theories focus on acknowledging the history, pervasiveness, and salience of race and racism in US society, including its schools, and the pitfalls associated with liberal education ideology, policy, and practices. Racial reconstruction is the process of ascribing new meaning to race in order to transform the ways we think about and, subsequently, act on our racial assumptions, attitudes, and biases, in an effort to dismantle the racial contradiction that has plagued our nation since the Constitutional Convention of 1787. And finally, racial reconciliation is where we seek to heal the soul wounds and damage that have been done in schools and society relating to race and racism. (p. 95)

Racial literacy is key to Douglass Horsford (2011) and the racial consciousness framework she posits because racial literacy establishes the necessary foundation upon which all of the other work happens. “When we understand that the concept of race was developed to explain social inequalities and, in turn, justify discrimination,” explains Douglass Horsford (2011), “we are no longer surprised by Black-White achievement gaps, the disproportionate number of [B]lack and Latino males in special education, or the under representation of students of color in gifted or Advanced Placement classes” (p. 97). Much of Douglass Horsford’s research is heavily focused on educational leadership at both the school and district levels. Speaking to all educators, yet with a specific nudge to principals, administrators, superintendents, and policymakers, Douglass Horsford (2011) advised, “To be effective advocates for equal education, educators and educational leaders must be racially literate --understanding how race functions in the teaching, learning, administration, and implementation of policy at the school and school district levels” (p. 97).

Reflecting on the running metaphor of her book, a “burning house,” Douglass Horsford (2011) explained: “Just as firefighters must be well trained and knowledgeable of the devastating force of fire before ever arriving at the scene, educational leaders must be well versed in what race is, how it came to be, and how it functions in schools and society” (p. 97). It is imperative for educators to apprehend the “dynamic interplay of race power and privilege throughout every aspect of American life,” concluded Douglass Horsford (p. 97). Douglass Horsford (2011) put it in context for educators when she reminded readers of the “salient role of race as it relates to school achievement data, which are notoriously disaggregated by race, as well as income, language, and ability” (p. 97). In these ways and others, Douglass Horsford (2011) underscored how racial literacy, especially when applied to an educational context, positions school and district leaders

“to prevent or limit the devastating effects of race and racism, much as firefighters do through their fire inspections, training, and fire prevention campaigns” (p. 97).

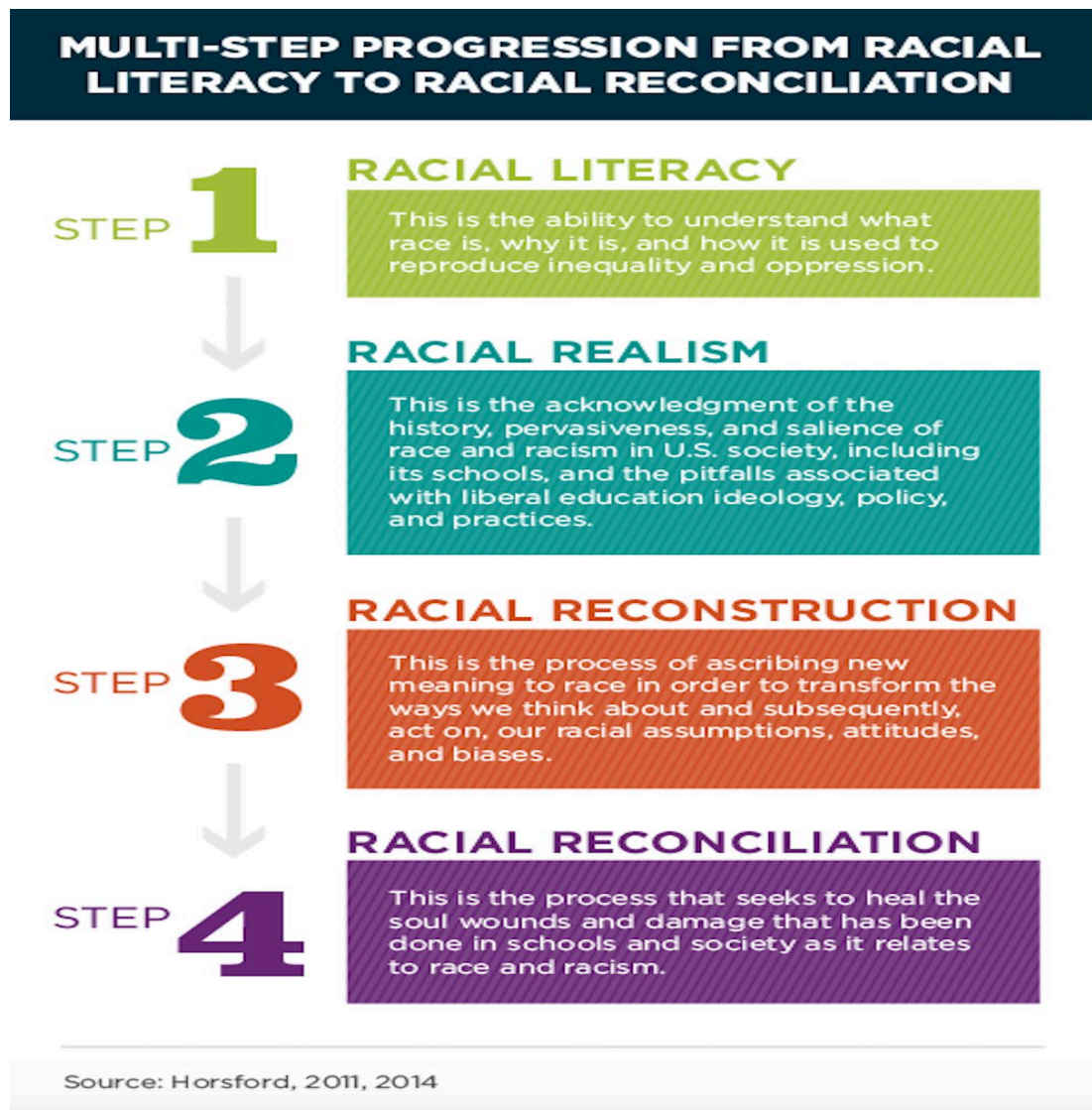


Figure 2:1 CRATEE Multi-Step Progression Model

Before closing out the chapter, Douglass Horsford (2011) attended to specific directives aimed at educational leaders who are willing to engage race and racism in their praxis and policymaking. “In practical terms,” the professor of educational leadership advised leaders to:

- 1) reframe discussions of race and racism from individual attitudes and acts of prejudice and discrimination toward an examination of the structural, institutional, and

administrative policies, processes, and practices that maintain and reproduce inequities in schools and school systems , and 2) think critically about the ideologies of color blindness, integration, diversity, and inclusion that are presented in racially neutral or a historical ways. Support for diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives that fail to recognize how race and racism work to maintain hierarchies, allocate resources, and distribute power will not do much to address gaps in student achievement, low school performance, and distrusting school communities (p. 98).

In this context, Douglass Horsford's (2011) implementation of racial literacy cultivation and practice is centered on educators and policymakers.

2.3.5 2013: Racial Literacy Cultivation/Application in Classrooms

In 2013, Sealey-Ruiz published, "Building Racial Literacy in First-Year Composition" in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. In the author's own words: "This work represented a deeper look into research previously conducted and published on my FYC classroom" (p. 390). By FYC, Sealey-Ruiz (2013) was referring to the First-Year Composition study she conducted in 2006 and presented in her 2011 article which was previously discussed in this paper. Sealey-Ruiz (2013) covered the same ground as the prior study as it was guided by the same research questions: What does racial literacy skill-building look like in FYC? How do FYC students use their writing toward building their racial literacy skills? Yet, Sealey-Ruiz (2013) expounded on nuances presented in the 2011 article by focusing on only two of the 11 texts produced by student-participants who engaged with the writing assignments and group discussions over the course of three months and 48 class sessions.

From her findings, Sealey-Ruiz (2013) concluded: "By achieving racial literacy, students have the tools to understand how racial signifiers operate in a text while also creating awareness

of each student's positionality" (p. 387). Likewise, the author's final line in the piece is as salient and compelling as it is poetic. Sealey-Ruiz (2013) wrote: "Moving toward a pedagogy of racial literacy in FYC is not just a good way to teach—it is a just way to teach" (p. 396). Two parts of this concise sentence stand out. One, the authors summoning of a "pedagogy of racial literacy"; and two, the prose emphasizing the notion of justice embedded in racial literacy. Sealey-Ruiz (2013) explicitly stated that her intention for this study is to "add to the research on racial literacy building in composition classrooms" (p. 387) and "contribute to the growing body of research that emphasizes the need to develop racial literacy in English classrooms (Skerrett, 2011) and to talk about race in literacy classrooms" (p. 385).

The Second Dissertation on Racial Literacy

Thinking with Sealey-Ruiz (2013) about the cultivation and application of racial literacy in classrooms, was PhD candidate at the University of South Carolina, Kimberly J. Howard. In 2013, Howard's dissertation on racial literacy entitled: "I Can Be Silent and Be Saying a Lot: Teachers' Racial Literacy in a Southern Elementary School", entered public circulation. "This ethnographic study explores... [h]ow teachers in [a] school make sense of race, and how the spatiality of the school informs this process", explained Howard (2013). Furthermore, the "study demonstrated how teachers' racial (il)literacy is manifested in spatialized moments that have real and lasting implications for teachers and students in the school," continued Howard (2013). The findings of the study "provided the foundation for a conceptual tool that could be utilized by educational researchers interested in better understanding the intersections of geographic place and race in educational settings," Howard (2013, p.1) reported.

2.3.6 2014: Racial Literacy Cultivation/Application in Schools and Districts

While the scholarly spotlight of 2013 focused on the cultivation and application of racial literacy in classrooms, scholarly literature published in 2014 sustained and nuanced that interest by placing students at the center. This was particularly apparent in the work of Amy Vetter and Holly Hungerford-Kresser. This pair of education scholars on faculty at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and the University of Texas, Arlington, respectively, conducted a study involving high school students and cultivating racial literacy. The study was published in the *Journal of Language and Literacy Education* as: “‘We Gotta Change First’: Racial Literacy in a High School English Classroom.” Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser (2014) argued: “Students need more opportunities to learn how to respond to and counter forms of everyday racism” (p. 82). On this premise, their qualitative study investigated how a “peer-led group of youth engaged in dialogue about issues of race in regard to an eleventh-grade Language Arts assignment” (p. 82). The authors used racial literacy as a framework to analyze the data they collected from three small group discussions and derived evidence which supported the proposition and consideration of three points relevant to racial literacy cultivation in students. Vetter and Hungerford-Kresser (2014) assessed that “dialogue in the small group fostered opportunities for students to engage in the following elements of racial literacy: a) hear and appreciate diverse and unfamiliar experiences; b) facilitate problem-solving with the community; and c) create opportunities to talk about race” (p. 82).

The combination of Douglas-Horsford’s (2011, 2014) research on racial literacy cultivation and application in school leadership and Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser’s (2014) focus on racial literacy cultivation in students, provides a proper scholarly introduction to the racial literacy research of Howard Stevenson, a clinical and consulting psychologist and professor of

Education and Africana Studies at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Stevenson carved out a noteworthy space in the world of racial literacy starting in 2014 with the publication of *Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools: Differences That Make a Difference*. Just to note, within the realm of educational research at the time, Stevenson's text was the only other book in circulation with "racial literacy" in the title, along with Twine's 2011 text. Stevenson began his book with the following quote from Purdie-Vaughns, et al. (2009), which I found relevant to include due to the way it organically evokes social illiteracy (Rand, 2020) and inherently invokes racial literacy.

Overcoming racism in schools requires more than rhetoric. It requires a willingness to fight against a special kind of ignorance and to fight for a different kind of literacy. Battling racial stereotypes that attack intellectual potential and motivation has to be one of the most stressful psychological challenges facing black students in a society that is afraid to discuss or resolve racial matters.

Stevenson (2014) took on the task and utilized the liberty of having an entire book to explore, analyze, and theorize racial literacy. Naturally, there is an abundance of material to consider when reviewing a book of significant length. For this literature review, the core themes of Stevenson's (2014) text are presented and contextualized within the contemporary discourse on racial literacy in schools and education research.

To start, Stevenson (2014) proposed, "gently approaching racism and whiteness through metaphor and storytelling" (p. 2). Metaphor must be the starting point for a "racial stress-focused approach to overcoming racism to reduce Black academic underachievement and rejection," he explained (p. 2). Why? Because "metaphors are extremely helpful in sidestepping or skirting around defensive postures, particularly those ignited by racial tension" (Stevenson, 2014, p. 2).

Would this be similar to the social analysis, strategic moves, or race politics of fiction writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Ishmael Reed, Octavia Butler? These authors, among countless others, have used metaphor to address race, racism, and racial violence in profound and transformative ways. “Through metaphor,” Stevenson (2014) wrote, I hope to bring pause to the initial resistance of educator leaders, parents, teachers, and even students to embrace school reform that directly faces racial conflicts instead of evading them” (p. 2). Whether one chooses to avoid or engage in racial matters, it can be stressful, (Stevenson, 2014). As that is intended to apply to anyone in the equation, it is important to keep track of all involved, as Stevenson (2014) did by promoting the value of cultivating and applying racial literacy as it relates to all constituents of the K-12 education complex.

Stress is called the “silent killer” for compelling reasons. Despite its apparent invisibility, stress is a real factor to be addressed. “Stress affects thoughts, feelings, body reactions, relationships, and actions,” explained Stevenson (2014, p. 4). Likewise, the stress induced by race is palpable and warrants attention. When stress is present, coping strategies are crucial. Stevenson, a psychologist, highlighted this point. In Stevenson’s (2014) words:

Without a set of coping responses to the ideologies of racial inferiority that intentionally and unintentionally contribute to racially and equitable practices in schools, students, parents, and educators will be overwhelmed by racial matters. They will rarely view them as resolvable, will learn few tangible racial conflict resolution skills, and will act out this incompetence in daily relationships. Trying to improve race relations and combat racial stereotypes without addressing the stress that is generated by these endeavors is like trying to solve algebraic equations without understanding multiplication...” (p. 3).

Stevenson (2014) resigned that reducing stress is a much more likely project than ridding the United States of racism. Still, Stevenson (2014) conceded, “While racial conflicts can be resolved, they cannot be resolved without knowledge or skill. The skill sets to resolve these conflicts are complex and constitute a literacy level of practice, but they can be taught within school curricula and family conversation” (p. 4). The addition/integration of racial knowledge, skill, and literacy into school curricula is directly aligned with the topic of this dissertation. However, the persistent problem remains “public, private, charter, and independent schools resist teaching this literacy daily. Most families struggle at teaching these skills daily” (Stevenson, p. 4). Not only do they resist or struggle, they “fail.” Why do they fail? According to Stevenson (2014): “Mostly, schools and families fail at teaching racial coping because teachers, administrators, parents, and students are not trained to do so, do not approach it as a competency topic, nor do they have a rationale for engaging in such a quote unquote risky practice” (p.4).

Stevenson (2014) posited that knowing how to talk about race is a talent or skill set and a form of literacy. Furthermore, he believes that racial literacy and competence could help close the achievement gap, yet it is all too frequently left-out of the toolbox or left off of the list of strategies (p. 4). According to Stevenson, “racial literacy is the ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful social interactions. The teaching of racial literacy skills protects students from the threat of internalizing negative stereotypes that undermine academics critical thinking, engagement, identity and achievement” (p. 4).

The way Stevenson (2014) told the origin story is as follows: “Racial literacy was notably coined by France Winddance Twine (2003) and Lani Guinier in 2004” (p. 19). Note the difference between his version and the one articulated in this paper. Stevenson goes on to explain: “Although my definition of racial literacy is similar to Guinier’s (2004) focus on balancing individual and

systemic racial politics that intersect with other diversity politics, it is more similar to Twine's (2011) definition as focused on relational dynamics where skills sets are taught" (p. 19). Stevenson (2014) provides a block quote of Twine's 2011 definition, which I include here because of its relevance to Stevenson's approach to racial literacy.

Twine suggests that racial literacy involves (1) the definition of racism as a contemporary problem rather than a historical legacy; (2) an understanding of the ways that experiences of racism and racialization are mediated by class, gender inequality, and heterosexuality; (3) a recognition of the cultural and symbolic value of whiteness; (4) an understanding of racial identity's as learned and an outcome of social practices; (5) the possession of a racial grammar and vocabulary to discuss race, racism, and antiracism; and (6) the ability to interpret racial codes and racialized practices. (p. 92)

Stevenson (2014), on the other hand, stated that his focus in racial literacy has to do with "understanding more deeply the multi dimensionality of racial socialization practices of African American parents and Black children, and the context within which parents fight this socialization necessary for their children's success" (p. 20). Like Twine, Stevenson's brand of racial literacy is also focused on families however, Stevenson explained:

The concept of racial literacy is functionally useful in response to racial conflict and competence in public racial discourse that occurs in schools and classrooms for anyone. Families and school personnel are equally culpable for delivering these skills, too, whether or not they are conscious racial politics. Racial literacy assumes there is a gap in the ways authority figures relate to students and parents of color. One thrust of a racial literacy agenda for reforming education rest in evaluating not if but how well individuals, families, and systems navigate racial discourses in the multiple worlds in which children learn. A

second thrust of this agenda is recognizing that for racial literacy to influence how families and youth engage the social and academic world, it takes practice. (p. 20)

Once again, a strong resonance was detected between the ideas this dissertation seeks to advance and the words of Stevenson (2014) when he wrote that his greatest hope is that “schools become courageous hubs of relational learning that teach racial literacy to educators, students and families as clearly and efficiently as they teach” reading, writing, and arithmetic. “The goal of this racial legacy literacy”, he explains, has everything to do with “teaching students how to become self-confident as learners about these traditional topics as they learn about their racial heritage” (p. 24). Notice Steven’s phrasing of *racial legacy literacy*. In this instance of racial literacy, the emphasis is placed on literacy of racial legacy or heritage.

Elsewhere in the text, Stevenson (2014) explained: “Schools are centers of racial socialization and represent the one place where social ethics, economic warfare, national politics, and racial conflict emerge, collide, erupt, or lay hidden daily” (p. 60). This particular sentiment was articulated in the introduction of this dissertation, but less eloquently. Schools are unique social centers in exactly that way. Stevenson (2014) continued: “Not only do schools teach about citizenship, they teach us how to avoid racial matters and simultaneously desire racial supremacy’s internalizing foundational principles” (p. 60)

Stevenson included a most salient sentiment and quote from the “Father of Black History” that ties up the importance of racial literacy in education. In the eyes of Carter G. Woodson (1933), anti-Black and racialized violence started in the schools and classrooms of the United States. As he stated in 1933: “This crusade is much more important than the anti-lynching movement, because there would be no lynching if it did not start in the schoolroom” (p. 8). The crusade Woodson was writing about was the life-or-death effort that he dedicated his life too: shaping public education

to uplift and liberate students rather than mislead, enslave and denigrate its non-white pupils (p. 60).

Stevenson had another publication published in 2014. As a second author to Sherry Coleman, they penned: “Engaging the Racial Elephant: How Leadership on Racial Literacy Improves Schools” which was *Independent School*. This brief article brings Stevenson into the conversation that Douglass Horsford (2011, 2014) was leading in terms of racial literacy praxis for school leaders and administrators. The main reason I wanted to include this article besides the effort of being comprehensive, was to present the seven-point guidance Coleman & Stevenson (2014) provided in this article. This piece in particular, stands out as the key contribution this article made to the overall body of literature on racial literacy.

The central question this article addressed is: What does racial literacy look like in an independent school community? To this question, Coleman & Stevenson (2014) state that it would include the following three things. Firstly, “it would include school leadership learning how to use racial stress reduction and mindfulness practices before they develop diversity mission statements or engage in diversity conversations or conflicts” (p. 90). Secondly, “it would include creating climates of safety through ongoing professional development sessions that encourage storytelling, journaling, stress reduction, debating, and role-playing of racial elephant situations” (p. 90). Thirdly, “it would include annual evaluation and processing of past and current racial elephant situations using case studies to illuminate and discuss the clash of different vantage points and coping demands of students, teachers, parents, and leaders” (p. 90). “In particular,” Coleman & Stevenson (2014) add the seven points aforementioned: “leadership in racial literacy means being able to:

1. face racial conflicts as challenges rather than as threats;

2. resolve your own stress during the moment of a racial crisis;
3. evaluate your stress vulnerability and management after each crisis;
4. use relaxation strategies to resolve stress reactions that ignite avoidance of racial encounters;
5. seek help from experts to resolve any racial conflict;
6. keep a log of case studies of racial conflicts that allow you to learn from mistakes and triumphs; and
7. develop mission statements that support the aim of a well-functioning diverse faculty.

With this article by Coleman and Stevenson, this section covering “Stage Two - The Development: 2005-2014” of racial literacy, draws to a close. It was an era which contained the turning points in the trajectories of the two original streams of racial literacy (Guinierian and Twinian) that flowed into the field of education research and formed a third stream: racial literacy in education. Over the course of the first nine years of this third stream’s existence, a first wave of scholars in education research adopted and innovated the racial literacy frameworks constructed by two scholars in fields of legal studies, CRT, Black studies, cultural anthropology, sociology, and whiteness studies. Following this era of development, was an era of proliferation. By the close of 2014, the Movement for Black Lives had spread rapidly. Beyond the public, it triggered a response in the academy, from students and faculty. In the next section, the most recent wave of knowledge production within the racial literacy discourse will be reviewed.

2.4 Stage Three - The Proliferation: 2015 - 2021

Racial Literacy in the BLM/JEDI Era: The Academic “Firefighters”

The artificial demarcation between “Stage Two” and “Stage Three” circa 2014-15 is inspired and intellectually supported by significant world events. Although the #BLM movement

(Movement for Black Lives) began in July of 2013 after the killer of Trayvon Martin (Florida) was acquitted on all charges, it was in the summer of 2014, after Eric Garner (New York) and Michael Brown (Missouri) were murdered by cops, and then Tamir Rice (Ohio) in the fall of 2014, that the #BLM movement gained more prominence. Simultaneously, the pressure, urgency and demands for educators to address issues of race, racism and racialized violence with students accelerated significantly. The widespread and perpetual replaying of the video footage of the murders of Garner and Rice—which was perhaps the only thing ‘new’ and ‘different’ about the violent policing of Black people since the Civil War, with the exception of Rodney King (California) in 1991—amplified public awareness of anti-Black violence within the U.S. to audiences worldwide. This social media phenomenon resulted in #BLM sympathizing, solidarity, protests, and demonstrations in hundreds of cities in the U.S. and around the world.

To be sure, the Movement for Black Lives, coupled with six years of Barack Obama as the first African American U.S. President, had an observable influence on mainstream attention to “Blackness”, public acts of “anti-Blackness”, and conversations about “antiracism” which propelled a broader interest in racial literacy. Naturally, this groundswell flowed onto school campuses and inspired activism and education research. Within the academy, demands and student-led demonstrations grew louder and more visible around matters of race, racism, racialized violence, anti-Blackness, and LGBTQ rights. Representation, accountability, diversity, inclusion, equity, social justice, and anti-bias/antiracist education were popular interests.

The literature published on racial literacy in educational research reflected this zeitgeist. Several articles and books hit the press produced by a next wave of scholars, as well as scholars from the first wave—discussed in “Stage Two.” In deep consideration the number of articles and books that were published during this era, this section of the literature review has been organized

differently than the previous ones presented. This portion of the retrospective is arranged thematically, based on the area, topic, or subfield that unified—or was at least capacious enough to group—the articles and books under review. In total, there are 24 articles, one book chapter, three dissertations, and four books (presented in their own group) covered in this section. These texts have been grouped into the following eight themes: Social Studies; Teacher Education/Pre-Service Teachers; In-service Teachers/Educators; Professional Development; Literacy Education; Education Policy and Leadership; Critical Racial Literacy; and Racial Literacy in Data. These themes have been highlighted in boldface representing their respective entries. There may be the case in which an article overlaps into more than one theme or is the sole representative of a theme.

2.4.1 Social Studies

That the greatest number of articles on racial literacy during the #BLM era were in the area of Social Studies was not an unexpected finding. As previously discussed, Social Studies classrooms and courses can be ripe and productive spaces for racial literacy efforts (Brown, 2011). In this subfield of study, articles on navigating “white social studies” (An, 2020), gaining “racial media literacy” through teaching about elections (Busey, 2016), teaching Black history as a racial literacy project (King, 2016), accessing racial literacy through teaching “controversial issues” (King, Vickery & Caffey, 2018), and advancing racial literacy in students of color through teaching racial literacy in Humanities courses (Epstein & Gist, 2015) emerged during this racially explosive era.

2.4.2 Teacher Education/Pre-service Teachers

Since the earliest era of racial literacy scholarship in the field of education research, racial literacy cultivation/application in/with Teacher Education/pre-service teachers has been a predominating theme in the literature (Milner, 2003; Rogers & Mosley, 2006, 2008, 2011; Sealey-

Ruiz, 2011b). This is one area of focus that has been a consistent feature of the literature in both stages of the racial literacy in education project. During #BLM era, that momentum maintained. Subjects such as: advancing racial literacy in urban preservice teacher education to disrupt the “(mis)reading of Black males” (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015) and the relevance of Black history (King, 2016); as well as the responsibilities of white pre-service teachers (Flynn, Worden & Rolón-Dow, 2018; Drake & Rodriguez, 2019) were explored and examined in the literature. Adding to this conversation, was a dissertation on racial literacy preparation in teacher education candidates (McMurtie, 2015).

2.4.3 Literacy Education

Racial literacy in Literacy Education has been another long-running theme in the educational research literature since 2006 due to the early work of a couple of Literacy Education professors (Mosley, 2010; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2006, 2008;) who paid attention to racial literacy early in its bloom. That same pair of scholars returned in 2015 with a case study on constructing racial literacy in literacy teachers through “critical language awareness (Wetzel (Mosley) & Rogers, 2015). Pushing the discourse forward from a different angle, Kaczmarczyk, Allee-Herndon, & Roberts (2018) discussed how literacy approaches might be useful in addressing racial illiteracy to engage racial dialogue between teachers and students.

2.4.4 Student Writing and First Year Composition (FYC)

Expanding the effort pioneered by Sealey-Ruiz (2011a, 2013) within the educational research literature focused on racial literacy cultivation in community college students through coursework in student writing and First-Year Composition (FYC) courses, Grayson (2017) discussed the promising practices of encouraging race talk through engaging with a song lyrics-based curriculum and narrative song lyrics as texts. In 2018, Grayson followed with a full-length

text, *Teaching Racial Literacy: Reflective Practices for Critical Writing*. Three years later, in the spring of 2021, Sophie Bell contributed to this particular conversation regarding the cultivation of RL in students through composition activities with her book, *Mapping Racial Literacies: College Students Write About Race and Segregation*.

2.4.5 Education Policy and Leadership

The role and work of racial literacy in Education Policy and Leadership was another theme addressed by a few authors during this current era of education scholarship in racial literacy. Developing principals as racial equity leaders (Raskin, C. F., Krull, M., & Thatcher, R. 2015) was one topic; while desegregation policy as social justice leadership (Radd & Grossland, 2016) was another. Following Canen's scholarship out of Brazil in 2010, Da Costa (2016) analyzed and discussed the significance of racial literacy as anti-racist education policy.

2.4.6 In-service Teachers'/Educators' Professional Development

In another area of research, case studies focused on In-service Teachers'/Educators' experiences with engaging racial literacy proliferated. There were articles that highlighted Black male teachers working with Black male students (Allen, 2019); and Latiné female teachers cultivating racial literacy through autoethnography (Colomer, 2019); as well as one about an African American female professor engaging in autoethnography through critical race theory to cultivate "critical racial literacy" (Brown, 2016). There was also an ethnographic account of how "critical racial literacy" looks when introduced into the homes, schools, and communities in the contexts of early childhood education (Nash, K., Howard, J., Miller, E., Boutte, G., Johnson, G., Reid, L. 2018). There were two dissertations in this area deeply investigating professional development for teachers. One was concerned with cultivating racial literacy as a form of "critical

professional development” (Nyachae, 2018). The other conducted a case study on racial literacy in the context of a healing professional development workshop series (Acosta, A. 2020).

2.4.7 Critical Racial Literacy

To say more about critical racial literacy, it is helpful to return to the work of Keffrelyn Brown (2016, 2017). During this phase, Brown published two texts that explicitly addressed and deeply engaged racial literacy. The first is a book chapter entitled: “In Pursuit of Critical Racial Literacy: An (auto)ethnographic exploration of Derrick Bell's three I's” in *Covenant Keeper: Derrick Bell's Enduring Legacy* (Ladson-Billings & Tate, Eds, 2016). The title of the chapter explained well the work that Brown (2016) penned in that particular contribution to the literature. In addition to the autoethnographic approach and the deep dive into CRT—specifically Bell’s framework of the “Three I’s”—Brown (2016) extended the language in the racial literacy discourse by adding “critical” to the term. Her direct engagement with CRT supported that move.

The following year, Brown expounded on critical racial literacy in an article entitled, “Why We Can't Wait: Advancing Racial Literacy and a Critical Sociocultural Knowledge of Race for Teaching and Curriculum” published in *Race, Gender and Class*. In this scholarly essay, Brown (2017) provided an informative literature review of racial literacy in addition to re-presenting much of the relevant portions of the 2016 book chapter [discussed above] in an article form. In Brown’s (2017) words: “in this paper, I draw from critical race theory and theory on the enacted practices of racial literacy to consider how a sociocultural knowledge of race for curriculum and teaching might look” (p. 81).

Reminiscent of Brown’s 2011 article and the language from her 2016 book chapter, Brown (2017) wrote: “I consider race in the everyday work of K-12 schooling and the challenges it presents to cultivating a critical racial literacy. I argue that in these racially perilous times, we

cannot wait to address race because it is not politically expedient” (p. 81). Here, at this nexus, Brown (2017) is able to assert yet another tweaked terminology from her toolbox: “we must act in the contours of what I call a *critical sociocultural knowledge of race* for teaching and curriculum: a framework grounded in theory and action, that accounts for race as both an individual and structural phenomenon, with implications on past and present relations.”

2.4.8 Racial Literacy in Digital Spaces/Spaces

As evidenced above, during this current era of #BLM awareness, racial literacy scholarship within educational research has proliferated widely and in robust ways. The framework made its way into new frontiers like racial literacy in digital spaces. The name of the following article by Philip, Olivares-Pasillas, & Rocha in 2016 expresses this point vividly: “Becoming racially literate about data and data-literate about race: Data visualizations in the classroom as a site of racial-ideological micro-contestations.” Without detracting from any of the other scholarship thus far discussed, this article is among the more interesting and unique pieces written on racial literacy in educational research in this current era (2014-2021). Instead of summarizing the article in my words, the words of the authors (2016) have been presented because they describe their work better than I can.

In this article, we nuance and complicate the push for data literacy in STEM reform efforts targeting youth of color. We explore a curricular reform project that integrated explicit attention to issues pertaining to the collection, analysis, interpretation, representation, visualization, and communication of data in an introductory computer science class. While the study of data in this unit emphasized viewing and approaching data in context, neither the teacher nor the students were supported in negotiating the racialized context of data that emerged in classroom discussions. To better understand these dynamics, we detail the

construct of racial literacy and develop an interpretative framework of racial-ideological micro-contestations. Through an in-depth analysis of a classroom interaction using this framework, we explore how contestations about race can emerge when data visualizations from the public media are incorporated into STEM learning precisely because the contexts of data are often racialized. We argue that access to learning about data visualization, without a deep interrogation of race and power, can be counterproductive and that efforts to develop authentic data literacy require the concomitant development of racial literacy.

Tapping into and expanding the literature on racial literacy in digital spaces, Detra Price-Dennis and Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz published: *Advancing Racial Literacies in Teacher Education: Activism for Equity in Digital Spaces* in May of 2021. This text aimed to advance the critical conversations on race in the digital age within the field of teacher education. The authors explained how and why a racial literacy framework is especially useful and instructive to teacher education programs operating in the current political climates and digital landscapes. Price-Dennis and Sealey-Ruiz (2021) discussed the practice and promise of fostering racial literacy in teacher educators and their students before demonstrating how to fuse racial literacy into curricula and instruction in ways that are relevant and responsive to characteristics of today's digitally-driven society.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the scholarly literature on racial literacy published between 2002 and 2021, with a hyper-focus on how it has been defined and theorized in in the field of educational research. I deliberately imposed a historical framework to situate and contextualize the literature into a kind of metanarrative capable of summarizing the evolution of “racial literacy” from inception to current times. In 2022, Racial Literacy turned 20—in terms of years of being *alive* in

academic discourse. The objectives set for this retrospective literature review were to chronicle the evolution of the racial literacy framework within academic and educational research over those 20 years; and to present all of the contributors and their contributions. The following chapter presents and discusses the systematic processes of investigation I employed to design, conduct, correct, and complete this study.

3.0 Chapter III: Research Design

The Systematic Processes of Investigation

This study is informed by multiple methodologies and utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods to capture, analyze, and present the collected data. As a result, this study can be described as one which employs a mixed-methods design (Miles, Huberman, Saldaña, 2014). The primary methodology engaged to gather, interpret, and describe the qualitative data with which the dissertation is concerned is known as *case study* (Berg, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2002;). The quantitative data contained, analyzed, and explained in this study were sourced from a survey aligned with the descriptions of *survey methodology* (Groves et al., 2009) and *multimethod design* (McCammon, Saldaña, Hines, and Omasta, 2012 as cited in Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Each research question called for a unique set of methods. While the data collected for RQ-1 were exclusively qualitative and gathered from semi-structured interviews (Berg, 2009), RQ-2 required a greater range of data be gathered, studied, organized, illustrated, and described. Results captured from the pre-course and post-course surveys served as the primary source for the quantitative data utilized. Primary sources in the forms of written responses from the post-survey instrument and interview transcripts from student focus groups administered specifically for this study provided the bulk of the qualitative data included in this study. Taken together, these sources provide a robust compilation of data to deeply engage with the research questions under consideration. More details on these methodological approaches are provided in the following pages.

3.1 Methodologies

3.1.1 Case Study

There are a number of approaches to case study methodology, and Berg (2009) detailed a few that apply to the research design of this dissertation study. The examples that resonated most were: (1) Yin's (2003) theory-before-research model and descriptive case study design; (2) Jensen and Rodgers' (2001) snapshot case studies and pre-post case studies, which are described as types of case studies; and 3) embedded case studies (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Yazan (2015) helps demystify this methodology by discussing case study methods in education research by way of a comparative analysis she conducted of three major texts in case study methodology by three of the field's respected thinkers: Yin (2002), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1995). As a result of Yazan's comparative study, it became apparent that both Yin (2002) and Merriam (1998) would be the more useful sources for methodologically framing case study in this dissertation.

Yin (2002), an award-winning social scientist and best-selling author of *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (1984; and sixth edition in 2014)—reportedly the “second most cited methodological work, qualitative or quantitative over a 20-year period” according to Google and Wikipedia—defines a case as “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context” (p. 13). As Yazan (2015) explains, from a Yinian perspective, case study “is an empirical inquiry that investigates cases... by addressing the “how” and “why” questions concerning the phenomenon of interest” (p. 138). The “how and why” answers are exactly what the research questions of this dissertation are seeking. In respect to the case as phenomenon, Merriam (1998) echoes Miles and Huberman's (1994) notion of “the case as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (Yazan, 2015, p. 139). For Merriam

(1998) the case study is “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such, as a program, institution, person, process or social unit” (p. xiii). This list clearly overlaps with the more comprehensive one provided by Miles et al., (2014). The latter include in their (2014) definition of a process “the adoption and implementation of an innovational education program in a school district” (p. 30). Taken together, it was clear that case study was a strong methodological fit for this dissertation study.

3.1.2 Survey Methodology & Multimethod Design

Survey methodology is described by Groves et al. (2009) as “a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purposes of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members” (p. 2). As this definition demonstrates, survey methodology is a rather straightforward approach. Perhaps this is why surveys are such a commonly used data-collecting tool. Miles et al. (2014) described a multimethod design survey as a survey that asks for (1) demographic information, (2) ratings to a series of prompts, and (3) provided space for an open-ended qualitative commentary to the prompts. Since the pre- and post-course surveys included characteristics of survey methodology and multimethod design, both appear to be relevant, useful, and applicable to this study. Full descriptions of the surveys are presented in the following section and images are pictured in Appendix F.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Data Collection

This study utilized a variety of methods for data collection. To explore the first research question—**How was the core-curricula course, PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance, conceived, developed, and implemented according to those deeply**

involved?—I employed the following three research methods. A) I conducted eight, one-hour, interviews with six members of the faculty and administration of the University of Pittsburgh, as well as a 2020 alumna, Sydney Massenberg. B) I searched, gathered, and annotated a combination of 33 published news articles, blurbs, and radio interviews directly related to the course in anti-Black racism, PITT 0210. C) I gathered an array of primary source material and supplemental documents related to the course, such as the petition (posted by Massenberg), university correspondence from the Provost and the Chancellor, and relevant course materials.

To investigate the second research question—**What do measurable outcomes of quantitative and qualitative data suggest and reveal about the capacity of this core-curricula course in anti-Black racism to cultivate racial literacy [acquisition] in students who engaged the course?**—I employed three systematic approaches. First, using software support from Word, Excel, Numbers, and Stata, I gathered, cleaned, analyzed, and graphically illustrated survey/multimethod design data collected from over 7,000 pre-course and post-course surveys. Second, I gathered all of the written responses from the open-ended post-survey questions four (PSQ-4) and six (PSQ-6), which together, totaled over 6,500 units of data. I read approximately 2,500 of these responses, coded 1400, and analyzed 1313 of them. Third, I conducted three, one-hour, focus groups with a total of nine students who engaged the course in anti-Black racism, PITT 0210.

3.2.1.1 Interviews

To address the concerns posed by the first research question of this dissertation, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Berg, 2009) with selected individuals who contributed to the conception, development, and implementation of PITT 0210. All the interviews—except one—were conducted using Zoom, an interactive online platform that allows for audio and visual

conversations in real time. Utilizing the recording and saving features Zoom offers as standard options for users of the platform, the audio and visual components of the interviews were recorded (with the permission of the participants) in this way. An additional, free-standing, audio recorder was used to capture the one interview that was not conducted on Zoom. For the protocol I utilized consistently while conducting the interviews see Appendix F

3.2.1.2 Focus Groups

To address the concerns posed by the second research question of this dissertation, I conducted focus groups with former students of the inaugural cohort of the ABRC. In total, nine students participated in one of three focus groups. All of the focus groups were conducted using Zoom, which allowed us to converse in real time. Each of the participants opted to utilize both the audio and video features. The audio and visual components of the interviews were recorded (with the permission of the participants) utilizing the recording and saving features Zoom offers as standard options for users of the platform.

Each of the focus groups were very different due to the unique composite of participants. For the protocol I utilized consistently while conducting the focus groups see Appendix G

3.2.1.3 Document Sourcing

To supplement the information ascertained via the interviews and focus groups, I utilized web-based resources like search engines and websites to locate and gather various documents such as the original petition, university correspondence, news articles, and course materials were retrieved, reviewed, and analyzed to provide greater context and expand the relevant data needed to document more thoroughly the process of actualizing PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance (the ABRC) from idea to implementation.

The ABRC garnered significant press and public attention in/from the news media. By my count, 33 media stories on or about the ABRC were published and aired—in the case of radio broadcasts—between June and December of 2020. In contrast to the input/output dynamics of social media, which had much to do with the groundswell that led to the ABRC, traditional media, such as news coverage about the ABRC was not directly related to how the course came to be; yet it did provide an array of secondary sources that offered an outsiders, or *etic*, perspective. What the fifth estate thinks and states is often interesting and sometimes important, even if only to corroborate or supply context the *emic* narratives of primary sources—insiders/informants. To enhance the research methods of this study and compare the findings of the interviews, I searched, identified, and reviewed 33 media stories on the course in anti-Black racism.

The majority of the media coverage chronicled different aspects of the ABRC and ranged from radio interviews to feature articles to boiler-plate blurbs to critical editorials and right-wing propaganda to an in-depth exposé on Dr. Alaina Roberts. Table 1, presented over the next four pages, displays the date, title, source, author, and annotations for each of the 33 media artifacts. See Appendix S for images and content from select articles.

Table 1 News Coverage of the Course in Anti-Black Racism (June 2020 – May 2021)

Date	Title	Publication	Author	Notes
06-03-2020	Pitt administrators address George Floyd's death, nationwide protests	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Johnson, Rebecca	Covers Gallagher's letter (6/2) re: racial injustice
06-10-2020	Pitt considering petition calling for black studies course requirement	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Johnson, Rebecca	Full-length; early stages; quotes Barnes, Roberts, & petition
06-11-2020	Recent alum wants Pitt to require black studies course	University Times Utimes.pitt.edu	Harrell, Donovan	News story; quotes Massenberg

07-24-2020	Committee wants to move quickly to create required Black studies course	University Times Utimes.pitt.edu	Harrell, Donovan	News story; quotes Bonneau & Falcone
08-17-2020	Pitt taking steps to improve racial equity, adding new course on anti-racism	WTAE – Pittsburgh's Action News wtae.com	Read by news anchor	Covers Gallagher's 6/2 letter to the community
08-20-2020	New Anti-Racism Course Aims to Inspire Paths of Scholarly Activism and Black Study	Pittwire pitt.edu	Staff	Feature article; quotes Covington & Cudd; committee listed
08-20-2020	University of Pittsburgh introduces mandatory anti-racism course for incoming freshmen	Daily News nydailynews.com	Braine, Theresa	News story; quotes Cudd & Covington
08-20-2020	Class of 2020 University of Pittsburgh makes students take class on 'How to be Anti-Racist' following Floyd and Taylor deaths	The Sun thesun.co.uk	Mansfield, Mollie	News story using excerpts from course overview & syllabus
08-21-2020	Freshmen at University of Pittsburgh Must Take Mandatory Course on Racism	The College Post thecollegepost.com	Staff Writer	News story; quotes Cudd & Covington
08-21-2020	Univ. of Pittsburgh Mandates Anti-Racism Course for Incoming Freshmen	The Washington Informer washingtoninformer.com	WI Webstaff	News blurb; quotes Cudd & Covington
08-21-2020	Pitt Introduces Mandatory Anti-Racism Course for Freshmen	Diverse Issues in Higher Ed diverseeducation.com	Wood, Sarah	News blurb citing the New York Daily News
08-21-2020	University of Pittsburgh announces required course on racism for incoming students	Trib Live (Pitt Tribune Review) triblive.com	Simonto, Teghan	News story w/ quotes from BAS, Cudd, & Covington
08-22-2020	Revealed: University forces all freshman take course called "Anti-Black Racism" that won't give letter grades	Law Enforcement Today lawenforcementtoday.com	Curren, Jenna	Right-leaning; short editorial; quotes Cudd & Covington

08-22-2022	University Of Pittsburgh To Require Anti-Black Racism Course	Black Ent. Television bet.com	Holloway, Lynette	News blurb; quotes Trib Live (PTR)
08-23-2020	Pitt offers new mandatory anti-racism class for first year students	The Pitt News pittnews.com	O'Donne ll, Mary Rose	Covers announcemen t of ABRC; interviews Massenberg
08-24-2020	Pitt Will Require New Students to Take Course on Racism	Inside Higher Ed insidehighered.com	Jaschik, Scott	News blurb; quotes Pittsburgh Tribune- Review (PTR)
08-24-2020	University of Pittsburgh mandates anti-racism class for incoming freshman	The Grio thegrio.com	Guerilus, Stephanie	Article covering the ARBC citing Cudd, Covington
08-26-2020	University of Pittsburgh Requires Incoming Freshmen to Take Course on Racism	Insight Into Diversity Insightintodiversity.co m	Stewart, Mariah	News story; quotes Cudd, Covington & Pitt Wire
09-08-2020	Pitt Introduces New Black Studies Course For First-Year Students	WESA-90.5 FM on "The Confluence"	Host: Kevin Gavin	Excerpts of 7" inter-view w/ Covington
09-11-2020	College students push for race and ethnic studies classes to be required, but some campuses resist	The Hechinger Report hechingerreport.org	Stellino, Molly	Full story covering Ottley-BSA & Bonner's efforts in the process
10-09-2020	Faculty voices support for mandatory Black studies course, allowing students to recognize religious observances	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Barrett, Thea	Reports on Faculty Assembly vote for required 3- crdt course
10-14-2020	SGB introduces resolution supporting mandatory Black studies class	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Fitchett, Nathan	Reports on Pitt's Stud. Gov. Board's move for required 3-CR course
10-21-2020	Compulsory Education at the University of Pittsburgh	National Assoc. of Scholars nas.org	Hormel, Terrance	Anti & critical article conflating

				ABRC w/ CRT
12-06-2020	University Of Pittsburgh Makes Lecture Materials From Anti-Black Racism Course Publicly Available	CBS Pittsburgh cbsnews.com	KDKA-TV News Staff	News blurb announcing public access to course materials
12-16-22	U of Pitt Makes Lecture Materials from Anti-Black Racism Course Publicly Available	Sustainable PGH sustainablepittsburgh.org	Posted by Kelsy Black	A repost of article from KDKA-TV on 12/06/22
12-22-2020	U Pitt's mandatory anti-racism class is filled with critical race theory, BLM talking points	Campus Reform campusreform.org	Zeisloft, Ben	Article associating CRT & BLM w/the ABRC
04-06-2021	Alaina Roberts: Telling the truth about history	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Maeroff, Dalia	Expose on Dr. Roberts incl. ABRC + 3CR course + Massenberg
04-14-2021	Left 'in the dark': Status of Black studies course requirement unclear	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Frank, Natalie	Full length story on 3CR course; quotes Roberts & Zwick
04-16-2021	Editorial Pitt's lack of progress, transparency on a Black studies course requirement is unacceptable	The Pitt News pittnews.com	Pitt News Editorial Board	Editorial; critical of Pitt's failure to launch 3-credit ABR course
04-23-2021	One-credit anti-racism course will continue this fall	University Times utimes.pitt.edu	Harrell, Donovan	Article covers Ed Policy Committee mtg on 4/19; quotes McCarthy
04-23-2021	Top Ten Most Racist Colleges and Universities: #5 University of Pittsburgh	FrontPage Mag frontpagemag.com TopTenRacistUniversities.org	"Actual Justice Warrior"	Propaganda article via D. Horowitz Freedom Ctr. Links ABRC w/ CRT/BLM
05-24-2021	Coming Soon To A Campus Near You: Anti-Racism 101	GBH News – Boston wgbh.org	Carapezza, Kirk	7" radio story w/ quotes

				Massenberg, Poliakoff, Muhammad, & Moser
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3.2.2 Multimethod Survey Data

To address the inquiries posed by the second research question, survey data collected between August 2020 and December 2020 from the pre- and post-course surveys were utilized. The surveys were administered, and the data were collected through Canvas, a web-based/online Learning Management System (LMS) used pervasively at the University of Pittsburgh. The pre- and post-course surveys were required assignments for all students taking PITT 0210 during the Fall semester of 2020 (N = 4,982). Although the surveys were required course assignments, there were small amount who did not complete either the pre-course survey, the post-course survey, or both surveys. Students could not engage (unlock) Module One or any of the subsequent learning modules without first taking the pre-course survey. Some students completed all of the learning modules and passed the course—which was graded on an S/NC scale, S for Satisfactory and NC for No Credit—but neglected to take the post-course before the course materials were universally locked at the end of the semester. Other students started the course but did not finish it; in which case, they did not take the post-course survey, despite taking the pre-course survey. Pre-course surveys that had no matching post-survey, were categorically dropped from the active data set.

3.2.2.1 Pre-Course Survey

The pre-course survey consisted of 10 questions. The first three questions required Likert scale responses, while the latter seven probed for demographic details (see Figure 3.1). Question one posed 14 prompts gauging respondent's levels of agreeability on a scale of one to six concerning their ideas about race, racism, racial discrimination, and social policies. Question two

posed six “how often do you think about the following...” prompts on a four-level scale between “often” and “never”. Question three presented seven prompts asking respondents “to what extent” are they able to explain, examine, and apprehend complex issues and dynamics of racism, power, privilege, and oppression on a five-level scale of agreeability. The demographic questions gathered a limited set of respondent background characteristics including: gender, transgender status, race, Latiné/Hispanic status, hometown urbanicity, parental education, and political typology/leaning. See Appendix I for images of the post-course survey.

3.2.2.2 Post-Course Survey

The post course survey consisted of seven questions (see Figure 3.2). The first three questions were the same as on the pre-course survey, while questions four, five and six were unique to the post-course survey. Only question seven on the post-course survey was a demographic question, mimicking question ten (political typology/leaning) on the pre-course survey. Therefore, the final question on both surveys were the same, just numbered differently, due to the differing number of questions per survey. Questions four and six on the post-course survey were open-ended questions, allowing for qualitative responses. Question four asked, “How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?” Question six asked, “Did you find this course valuable?” Question five presented nine prompts gauging respondents ideas concerning the extent their participation in the course improved their ability to recognize, analyze and/or discuss current events, self, history, race, and bias on four levels from “not at all” to “a great deal”. See Appendix J for images of the post-course survey.

3.2.3 Population Samples

3.2.3.1 Research Question One

For research question one (RQ-1), I employed a purposive and strategic (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) sampling method to identify and request interviews from a sample of the individuals who figured prominently in the conception, development, and implementation of the PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance. Minus the one informant who requested anonymity, the persons interviewed for RQ-1 are as follows: course catalyst, petition creator, and Pitt alumna Sydney Massenberg; University of Pittsburgh administrators: Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor, Ann Cudd, interim Executive Director of the Center for Teaching & Learning, Michael Bridges, and Adrian Grayson; course content creators: Professor of Education & former Associate Dean of Equity & Justice, Leigh Patel, and Professor of History, Alaina Roberts; and faculty advocate: University Senate President (2018-2021), Chris Bonneau, Professor of Political Science.

Table 2 (on the following page) displays the names of the seven informants (one pseudonym), the date(s) they were interviewed for RQ-1 (research question one), their relationship to the University of Pittsburgh, and to the course in Anti-Black Racism (ABRC).

3.2.3.2 Research Question Two

3.2.3.2.1 The QTS

In order to thoroughly address the complex demands of the systematic inquiry warranted by research question two (RQ-2), I had to produce three sample populations—one for quantitative analysis and two for qualitative analyses. The sample for the quantitative survey sample has been labeled “QTS”. The QTS was achieved by gathering the entire set of pre-course surveys (n = 4,982) along with the entire set of post-course surveys (n = 3,450) and using Excel to merge the sets

and drop all pre-course surveys missing a matching post-course survey. The resulting number of matching/paired surveys was 3,448—due to two instances of unpaired surveys. This newly created grouping of 3,448 became the QTS sample.

Table 2 Select Details of Interview Participants (in Chronological Order)

Name	Relationship to Pitt	Relationship to ABRC	Date(s) of Interview
Sydney Massenberg	Alumna, Class of 2020	Catalyst for course; author of the petition & primary student voice	02-21-2022
Michael Bridges, PhD	Interim Exec. Director – Ctr for Teaching and Learning	Admin charged with managing the course technology & delivery	02-24-2022 02-25-2022
Adrian Grayson, PhD (pseudonym)	Faculty	Confidential	03-21-2022
Ann Cudd, PhD	Provost & Senior Chancellor	Admin force behind course; public voice and ultimate decision-maker	03-23-2-22
Leigh Patel, PhD	Faculty, Educ Foundations, School of Education	ABR course design committee member; module designer & presenter	04-12-2022
Chris Bonneau, PhD	Faculty, Political Science, School of Arts & Sciences	University Senate president; course advocate professor-advisor-ally to Sydney	04-26-2022
Alaina Roberts, PhD	Faculty, Africana Studies School of Arts & Sciences	ABR course design committee member; module designer & presenter; chair of 3-credit course proposal, professor-advisor-ally to Sydney	07-14-2022

3.2.3.2.2 Focus Groups

For the next sample—the first of two intended for qualitative analyses—students were needed to participate in focus groups. I employed a voluntary response sampling method to recruit former ABRC students from the fall semester of 2020. A recruitment letter was sent via the course listserv to those enrolled in the fall of 2020. From those mass emails, I received close to 25 replies of interest. After all was said and done with regard to this effort, a total of nine ABRC alumni were interviewed in three focus groups comprised of three students each. Two of the focus groups were exclusively for students who were first-year (freshmen) students in the fall of 2020—the so-called “Class of 2024.” The third focus group was comprised of only graduate students who voluntarily enrolled in the course in Anti-Black Racism—unlike their undergraduate counterparts who were auto-enrolled and required to take the course for required graduation requirements.

Table 3 (presented on the page after next) lists and describes the focus group participants by 1) alias; 2) Pitt class affiliation and course enrollment status; 3) gender; 4) race; 5) hometown setting; 6) political ID on pre- and post-survey report; and 7) the focus group id# and date of the session.

3.2.3.2.3 The OER

To design the second qualitative sample I needed in order to address RQ-2, the decision was made to sample the responses of a little more than a third of the participant population. Starting with the excel spreadsheet containing the post-survey population (N = 3,448) participants’ responses listed in ascending order by a seven-digit student identification number assigned to all students at the university, the first 1400 responses were selected for analysis. After reviewing and removing the responses that were obviously not from first-year students—such as grad students

and staff who voluntarily enrolled—the Open-Ended Response (OER) sample was solidified at $n = 1313$.

After selecting this sample of 1313 (OER), the next task was to examine the demographic details of the OER ($n_2 = 1313$) group in contrast to the demographic details of the post-survey population/QTS ($N/n_1 = 3,448$) group. The results of these comparative analyses were varied in terms of the extent to which the proportional frequencies mirrored across the OER and QTS samples. These results are demonstrated in the figures following tables. Using percentages and integers, tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 illustrate the frequency and variance of student responses by each demographic detail measured by the pre- and post-surveys for the QTS (n_1) and the OER (n_2) study samples. Table 3.2 illustrates the student representation by race/ethnicity in the QTS and OER sample populations. The first two columns display the population data in percentages. The third column shows the variation between the QTS and OER samples. The fourth column presents the population percentages of the OER sample converted into integers.

Table 3 Select Details of Focus Group Participants (With Pseudonyms)

Name	Pitt Class & Enrollment Level	Gender	Race	Home-Town Setting	Political ID Pre Post	FG # Date
Ahmaud	Class of 2024 Undergrad Auto-enrolled	Male	African American	2	5 5	1 05-09-22
Laine	Class of 2024 Undergrad Auto-enrolled	Female	European American	2	1 2	1 05-09-22
Jiana	Class of 2024 Undergrad Auto-enrolled	Female	African American	2	4 5	1 05-09-22
Luke	Class of 2024 Undergrad Auto-enrolled	Male	European American	2	5 -	2 05-17-22
Briana	Class of 2024 Undergrad Auto-enrolled	Female	African American	2	4 4	2 05-17-22
Suzi	Class of 2024 Undergrad Auto-enrolled	Female	Chinese American	2	5 5	2 05-17-22
Bella	Grad student Self-enrolled	Female	European American	2	4 5	3 05-19-22
Hanna	Grad student Self-enrolled	Female	European American	1	5 5	3 05-19-22
Claire	Grad student Self-enrolled	Female	African American Bi-racial	2	4 -	3 05-19-22

Hometown Indices	1 = Rural; 2 = Suburban; 3 = Urban
Political ID Indices	1 = Farther Right; 2 = Right; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Left; 5 = Farther Left

As Table 4 displays, there is significant difference in the composition of racial/ethnic representation between the two data sets. While the numbers for the following four categories: Native American/Alaskan Native ($n_1 = .785/n_2 = .612$); Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ($n_1 = .262/n_2 = .386$); Multiracial ($n_1 = 1.95/n_2 = 1.62$); and Prefer Not to Say ($n_1 = 2.849$) are

relatively steady, the n1 and n2 for the remaining three categories diverge by multiple percentage points. Representation dropped in the Asian bracket by 8.5 points from n1 = 20.5% to n2 = 12%, and the African American/African/“Black” bracket by 2.7 points from n1 = 8.3% to n2 = 5.6%. The most dramatic variance was observed in the “White” (European American/European) bracket where the representation rose 12 points from 65% to 77%.

Table 4 Student Representation and Variance in the QTS & OER Sample

Race/Ethnicity	QTS % n1 = 3,441	OER % n2 = 1300	Variation By %	Sample By #/1300
African American/Black/African	8.3	5.6	-2.7	72
Alaskan Native/American Indian	.78	.62	-.16	8
Asian (Chinese, Indian, etc.)	20.5	12	-8.5	156
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.26	.39	+.13	5
Multiracial	1.9	1.6	-0.3	22
White/European American	65.4	76.9	+10.5	998
Prefer Not To Say	2.8	2.9	+0.1	39

Table 5 (on the following page) illustrates the student representation by gender, hometown description, parent’s education level, and political identity in the QTS and OER samples. In addition to displaying the population distribution in percentages for each category on every demographic question posed on the course pre- and post-survey, the same numerical data converted into integers to represent the frequency equivalent of the corresponding percent value.

This conversion makes more visible the exact number of persons by which each n2 bracket is under- or over-represented based on the n1 sample data. And once the equivalent ratio/quota for each group is calculated in the n2 sample (based on n1 percentages), the delta for each can be confirmed in whole numbers.

Table 5 Social Representation and Variance in the QTS & OER Samples

<i>Demographic Indicators</i>	QTS % n1 = 3446-49	OER % n2 = 1300	Variation By %	Sample By #/1300
<u>Gender Identity</u>	n1 = 3,448	-	-	-
Female	60	60	-	780
Male	38	38	-	494
Nonbinary	0.7	0.7	-	9
Prefer to Self-describe	0.2	0.2	-	3
Prefer Not to Say	1.2	1.2	-	16
<u>Hometown Description</u>	n1 = 3,446	-	-	-
Rural	14.6	17.5	+2.9	228
Suburban	72.6	72.6	-	944
Urban	12.8	9.8	-3.0	128
<u>Parent's Education Level</u>	n1 = 3,449	-	-	-
Some HS	2.4	1.5	-0.9	20
HS Grad	6.7	7.1	+0.4	92
Some College	8.3	6.9	-1.4	90
College Grad	34.3	34.7	+0.3	451
Graduate/Professional Degree	38	39.4	+1.4	512
PhD	10.3	10.4	+0.1	135
<u>Political Identity (Post-Survey)</u>	n1 = 3,449	-	-	Pre → Post #
Farther Right	2.3	3.0	-0.7	27 → 39
Right	8.7	10.6	+1.9	149 → 137
Moderate	32.9	29.6	-3.3	433 → 382
Left	33.5	32.8	-0.7	423 → 424
Farther Left	22.6	24	+1.4	268 → 310

In the same format, Table 6 (next page) illustrates the Latiné representation in the QTS and OER sample populations. The four columns of Table 6 follow the same format as Table 4.

Table 6 Latiné Representation and Variance in the QTS & OER Sample

Latiné Representation	QTS % n1 = 3,443	OER % n2= 1300	Variation By %	Sample By #/1300
Spanish, Hispanic, Latiné origins	6.5	4.0	-2.5	52
Prefer Not to Say	1.7	1.5	-0.2	20

3.2.4 Data Analysis

3.2.4.1 Research Question One

To address research question one (RQ-1), I collected, reviewed, analyzed, coded, and presented three types of qualitative data: (1) interview data, (2) digital documents and correspondence, and (3) news media articles/press. The interview data were studied via repeated close readings, analyzed, and inductively reduced through a “winnowing” process (Seidman, 2013). The documents I sourced, offered context and details that supported my analysis of the interview content and my reviews for completeness and accuracy. The narratives and recollections provided by each of the interview informants were checked for consistency, particularly concerning the objectively verifiable and/or cross-referenceable events that occurred prior to the public onboarding of PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance. Once the interviews and focus groups were safely and securely recorded via the digital and electronic means mentioned above, the audio recordings from the interviews were sent electronically to an approved provider of professional transcription services. Once I received them, the transcripts and their companion audio recordings were studied in tandem via repeated close readings, analyzed, and inductively reduced through a “winnowing” process (Seidman, 2013).

3.2.4.2 Research Question Two

For research question two, a mixed-methods approach was employed in the data analysis process. The approach utilized to analyze the quantitative survey data (QTS) and open-ended responses (OER) can be described as “mixed-methodological analytic theory” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003 as cited in Miles et al., 2014). With regard to the focus group data and the OER data, an “inductive thematic analysis” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) was conducted. Altogether, the data analysis occurred in the following three discrete, yet connected parts.

For part one of RQ-2, I gathered, cleaned, analyzed, and graphically illustrated survey/multimethod design data collected from over 7,000 pre-course and post-course surveys. For part two, I conducted three, one-hour, focus groups with a total of nine students—six undergrads and three grad students—who engaged the course in anti-Black racism. Three, I gathered all of the written responses from the open-ended post-survey questions: four (PSQ-4) and six (PSQ-6)—totaling over 6,500 units of data. Combined, I read approximately 2,500 of the responses from PSQ-4 and PSQ-6 and performed a first-cycle coding analysis of 2000 of them. Ultimately, the decision was made that a little more than one-third of the total sample population of 3,448 would be analyzed and presented. As there were approximately 3,448 responses to Post-SQ4, the number 1313 is equivalent to slightly more than one-third. After selecting this sample of 1313 (OER), I examined and cross-referenced the demographic details of the OER ($n_2 = 1313$) group in contrast to the demographic details of the post-survey population/QTS ($N/n_1 = 3,448$) group (see Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4). The next task was to subject the OER sample to nine additional cycles of thematic coding that partially resulted in a taxonomy presented in Table 5.5.

Once clarity and certainty were achieved with regard to the OER sample population and the methodological moves made in the sample selection process, the next stage of data analysis could resume. This involved an extensive, repetitive, and surgical process of coding for 1313 open responses from students to Post-course Survey Question four (PSQ-4) which asked students: *How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the US?* From beginning to end, that process was inductive, allowing for themes, categories, and identifiable patterns to emerge from the students' responses. The first cycle of coding employed a mixture of in vivo, emotion, and values coding (Miles, et al., 2014) to track the emerging patterns. Starting with the extremes, the term “ideal” was used to represent what seemed like the “most desired”

student response to the PSQ-4, while the term “antithetical” represented the “least desired” sentiment.

The subsequent cycles of coding maintained the coding methods just mentioned, yet, with each round of content and context analysis, the spectrum of colors and categories grew, as did the use of descriptive coding. In cases where PSQ-4 responses were ambiguous, perplexing, or minimal without explanation, the corresponding answer for PSQ-6 would sometimes provide context. Ultimately, it was the combination of descriptive, emotion, and magnitude coding (Miles et al., 2014) techniques that inspired and informed the names and descriptions of each category, delivered in light-hearted, contemporary, urban terminology. Although the terms used for the names may be unconventional, they are not abstract or frivolous. The names chosen were saddled with the duty to describe the vibe of the 1313 student sentiments corralled into 11 quasi-crude categories; or nine, if removing the categories for blank and N/A responses.

Each category was assigned a numerical value ranging from zero to ten when coding for magnitude [value] (MV). Finally, a descriptive list of the basic criteria associated with each thematic name was developed, which explain and corroborate the classification placements. See Table 5.1 in Chapter V for the matrix which presents all of the aforementioned data.

3.2.5 Indicators of Quality and Integrity

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), reliability is concerned with issues of “quality and integrity” and “whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods” (p. 312). According to the 10-point checklist the authors provide, this study can aim for and attain the following seven benchmarks to ensure reliability: (1) the study’s design is congruent with the research questions—which should be clear; (2) the researcher’s positionality within the context of the study is made explicit; (3) the findings resonate

across data sources; (4) the analytic frameworks are presented; (5) the data were collected from the various sources implied by the research questions and checked for quality; (6) the observations of multiple informants show expected degrees of convergence; (7) the peer review processes are in place (p. 312).

Distinct from reliability, validity is concerned with the “truth value” and sensibility of the findings (Miles et al., 2014). “Validity is a contested term among selected qualitative researchers. Some feel that this traditional quantitative construct has no place in qualitative inquiry,” explain Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014 (p. 313). The authors go on to mention that in his 1990 piece, Wolcott “rejected validity” in qualitative inquiry and proposed to substitute it with “coming to a deep understanding” (p. 313). Only two years after Wolcott’s proposition, Maxwell offered four “types of understanding that may emerge from a qualitative study: descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, and evaluative” (p. 313). Under the microscope of this study’s author, the dissertation here presented, attempts, if not achieves, to engage in and present all four “types of understanding”—to lesser or greater degrees.

With regard to the quantitative inquiries of this study, reliability and validity are appropriate concerns to consider. To validate and test the reliability of the population samples I designed and utilized for this study, I compared the distribution frequencies of the demographic indices between the population (N) and the QTS (n1) and OER (n2) samples. Figures 3.3 through 3.13 illustrate the count and frequency of student responses by each demographic index measured by the pre- and post-surveys for the QTS. As Figure 3.3 displays, there is significant difference in the composition of racial/ethnic representation between the two data sets. While the numbers for the following four categories: Native American/Alaskan Native ($n1 = .785/n2 = .612$); Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ($n1 = .262/n2 = .386$); Multiracial ($n1 = 1.95/n2 = 1.62$); and

Prefer Not to Say ($n1 = 2.849$) are relatively steady, the $n1$ and $n2$ for the remaining three categories diverge by multiple percentage points.

Representation dropped in the Asian bracket by 8.5 points from $n1 = 20.5\%$ to $n2 = 12\%$, and the African American/African/“Black” bracket by 2.7 points from $n1 = 8.3\%$ to $n2 = 5.6\%$. The most dramatic variance was observed in the “White” (European American/European) bracket where the representation rose 12 points from 65% to 77%.

In addition to histograms displaying the population density by percent for each category on every demographic question posed on the course pre- and post-survey, companion histograms have been prepared to show the same numerical data converted into integers to represent the frequency equivalent of the corresponding percent value. This is especially helpful in one, ascertaining the actual number of persons represented by percentages in the OER ($n2$) sample, and two, calculating how much variance—by number—exists between a quota that reflects exactly proportionate representation in every category between the QTS ($n1$) and OER ($n2$) samples and the disproportionate representation observed in the $n2$ sample. In other words, this conversion makes more visible the exact number of persons by which each $n2$ bracket is under- or over-represented based on the $n1$ sample data. And once the equivalent ratios/quotas for each group is calculated in the $n2$ sample (based on $n1$ percentages), the delta for each can be confirmed in whole numbers.

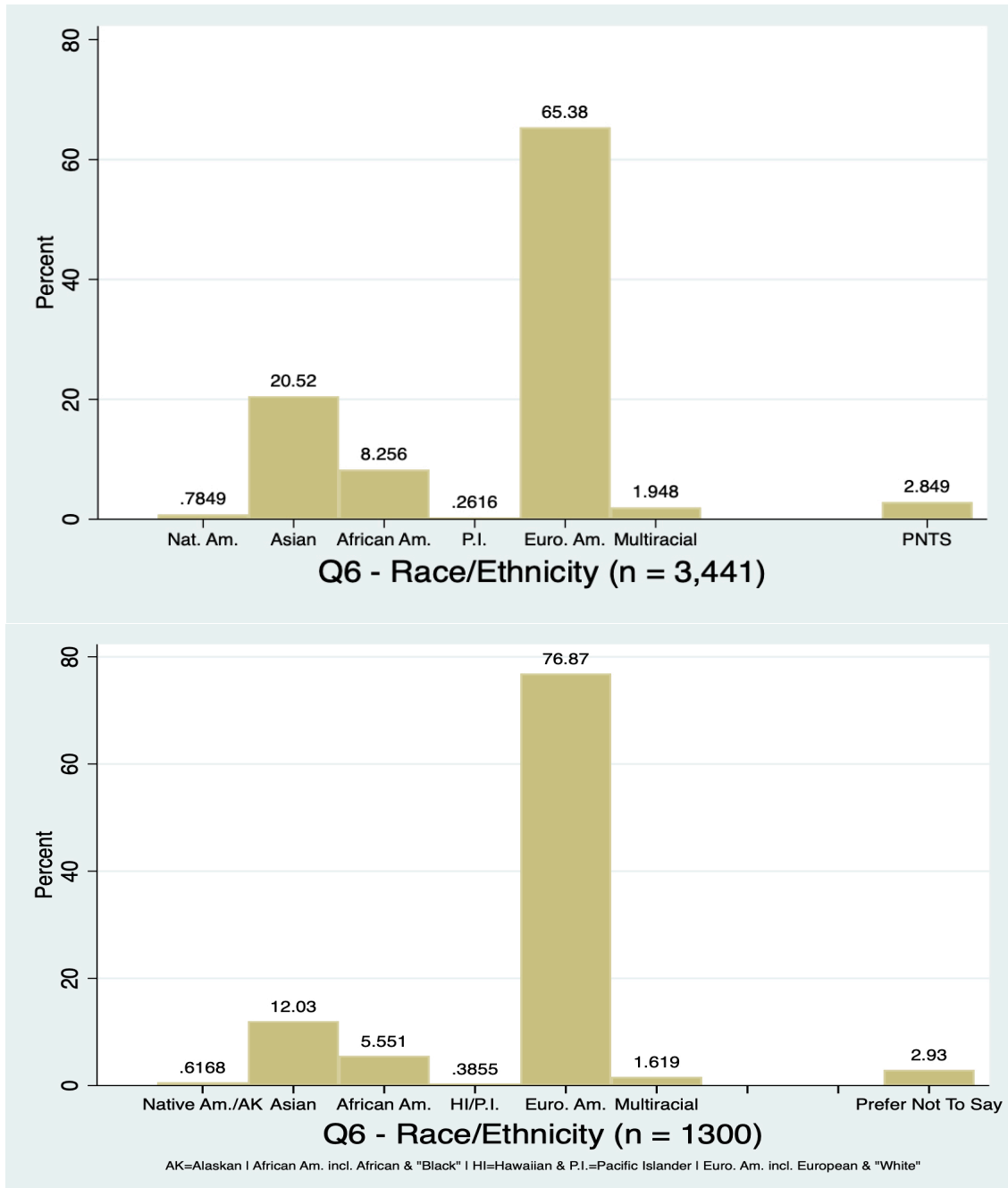


Figure 3:1 Histogram of QTS (n1) Compared to OER (n2) Sample by Race/Ethnicity

For instance, Figure 3:1 shows the representation in the Asian group at 20% in the n1 sample and 12% in the n2 sample. Figure 3:2 demonstrates that twenty percent of 1300 (n2 sample) is 260 people, and 12% representation in the Asian group (n2) is equivalent to 156 people. Thus, this disproportionate representation is equivalent to a deficit of 104 “voices” from the Asian group

in the OER (n2) sample. For the group labeled “African American/Black”, 6% (n2) is equivalent to 72 people. Yet, the n1 established the accurate proportion of representation for this group was approximately 8%. As eight percent of 1300 is the equivalent 104 persons, the disparity in African American/Black voices in the OER is 32. The third and final category of concern in the race/ethnicity data is the one labeled “White”, which was overrepresented by 12% in the OER sample. 77% of 1300 is equivalent to 997 people—the number of white voices represented in the n2 population. Yet, the QTS sets the actual proportion of white representation roundly at 65%, which converts into 845 persons in a population of 1300. Here, a surplus of 152 respondents were found to exist in the “white” representation in the OER.

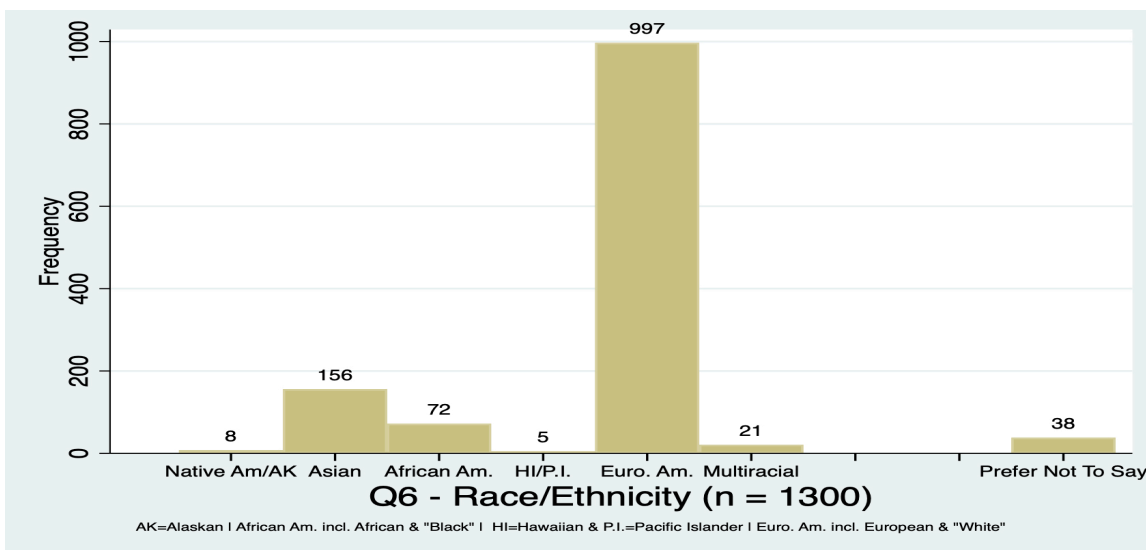


Figure 3:2 Percentages Converted to Integers for OER Sample by Race/Ethnicity

Figure 3:3 exhibits the data regarding the representation of Hispanic, Latiné, and/or Spanish origins within the QTS population versus that in the OER sample. The numbers reveal a drop in Latiné representation by 2.5 percentage points from 6.5% in the QTS (n1) to 4% in the OER (n2). In both sets, the PNTS (Prefer Not To Say) numbers hovered near 1.6%.

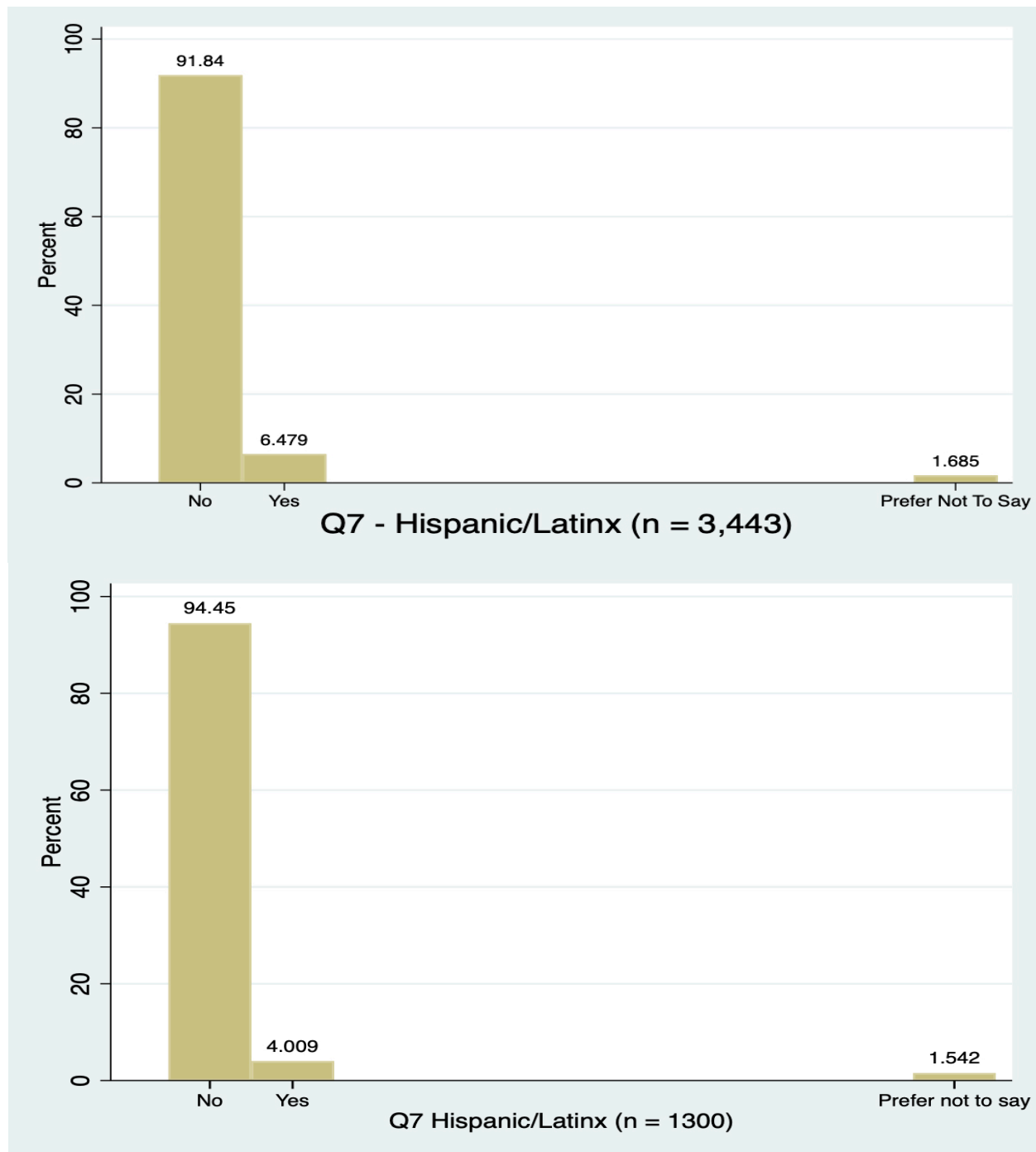


Figure 3:3 Histogram of QTS (n1) Compared to OER (n2) Sample by Latiné Origin

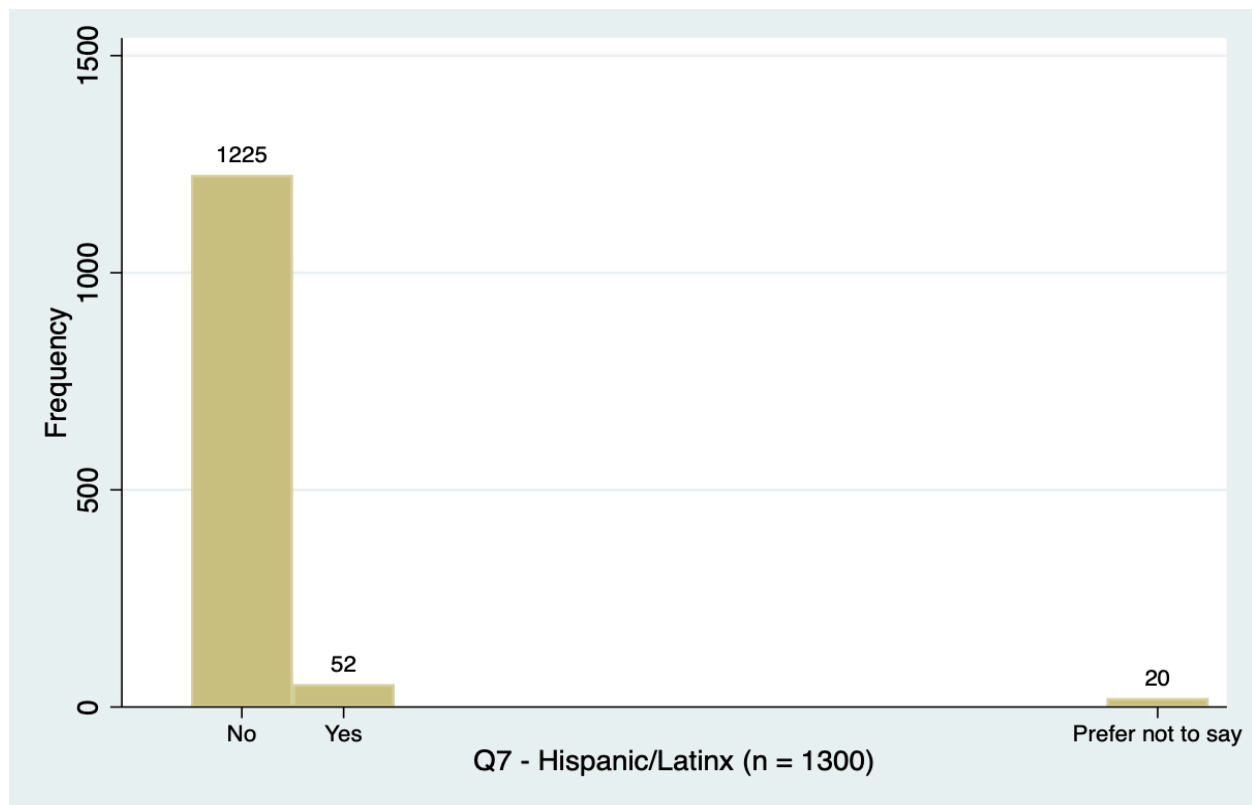


Figure 3:4 Percentages Calculated Into Integers for OER Sample by Latiné Origin

Figure 3:4 clarifies and confirms that 4% in the OER is equivalent to 52 people. Since people of Latiné/Hispanic descent represented up to 6.5% in the QTS sample, ideally there would've been closer to 84 Latiné voices represented in the OER data.

Figure 3:5 (on the following page) presents the demographic data on Gender Identity across both the OER and QTS data sets. The findings in Figure 3.7 capture perhaps the strongest uniformity of all demographic data indicators measured for this portion of this study. The data proportions displayed in each category mirror with impressive precision. There was no indicator that shifted more than 0.18%. The gender identity representation in both samples looks like: 0.7% - nonbinary; 60% - female; 37% - male; 0.2% - prefer to self-describe; 1.2% - prefer not to say.

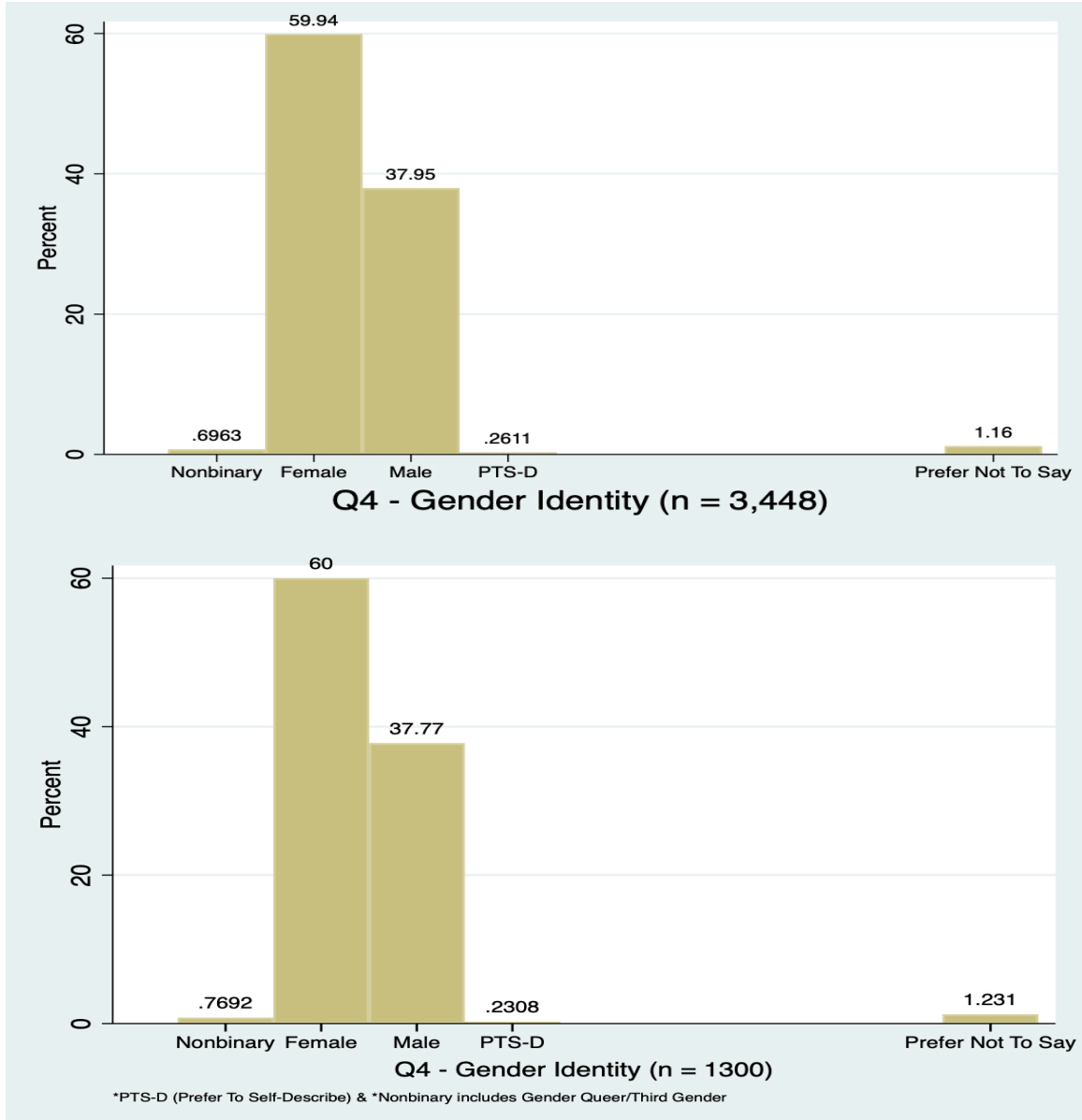


Figure 3:5 Histogram of QTS Compared to OER Sample by Gender Identity

Figures 3:6 and 3:7 illustrate and compare the Hometown Description data for the QTS and the OER. Figure 3.8 demonstrates that data proportions for two of the three categories reflect disproportionate representation percentages by a difference of 3% in both cases. Also in both cases, one indicator increases while another decreases. According to the numbers, the urban household representation in the OER (9.8%) data is 3 points lower than in the QTS (12.9%). It would appear

that 3 percent representation shifted from urban areas to rural areas because the latter increased to 17.5 % in OER sample from a 14.6% proportion in the QTS. The suburban area representation was stable at 73%. This suggests that the proportion of urban voices represented in the OER sample dropped by three percentage points, while overrepresenting in the rural area representation by three points. Figure 3:7 shows the same data 3:6, but in integers rather than percentages.

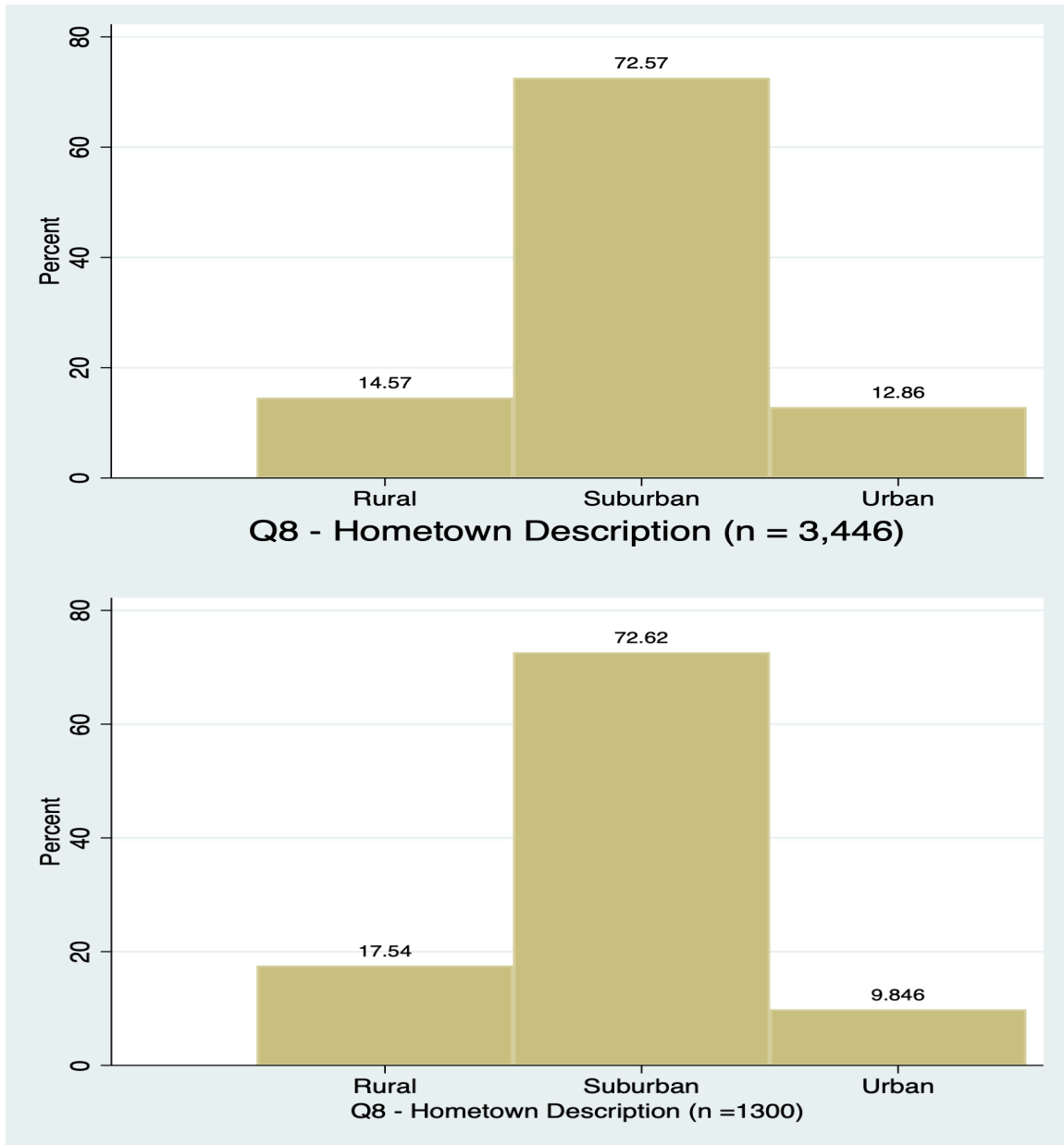


Figure 3:6 Histogram of QTS Compared to OER by Hometown Description

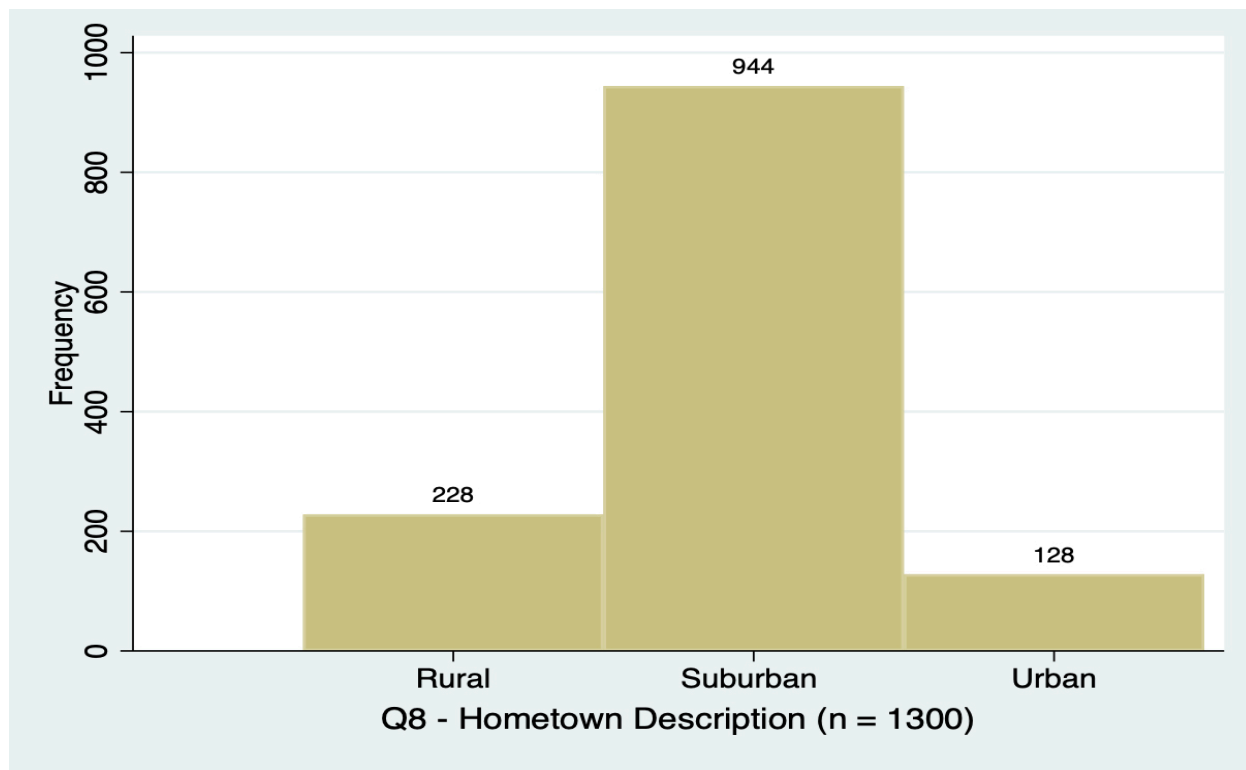


Figure 3:7 Percentages Converted to Integers for OER by Hometown Description

Figure 3:8 displays the comparative findings on Parent’s Highest Education Level across the OER and QTS data sets and reveals remarkable consistency between the sets.

The observable shifts detected, are present primarily in the “Some High School” and “Some University” categories in which OER (1.5% and 6.9%) sample shows slightly lower proportions by about 1 percentage point in both categories than the QTS (2.4% and 8.3%). On both surveys, the representative proportions for PhD were 10%; for Graduate or Professional degree, 38-39%; approximately 34% for the University Graduate; and 7% for High School graduate.

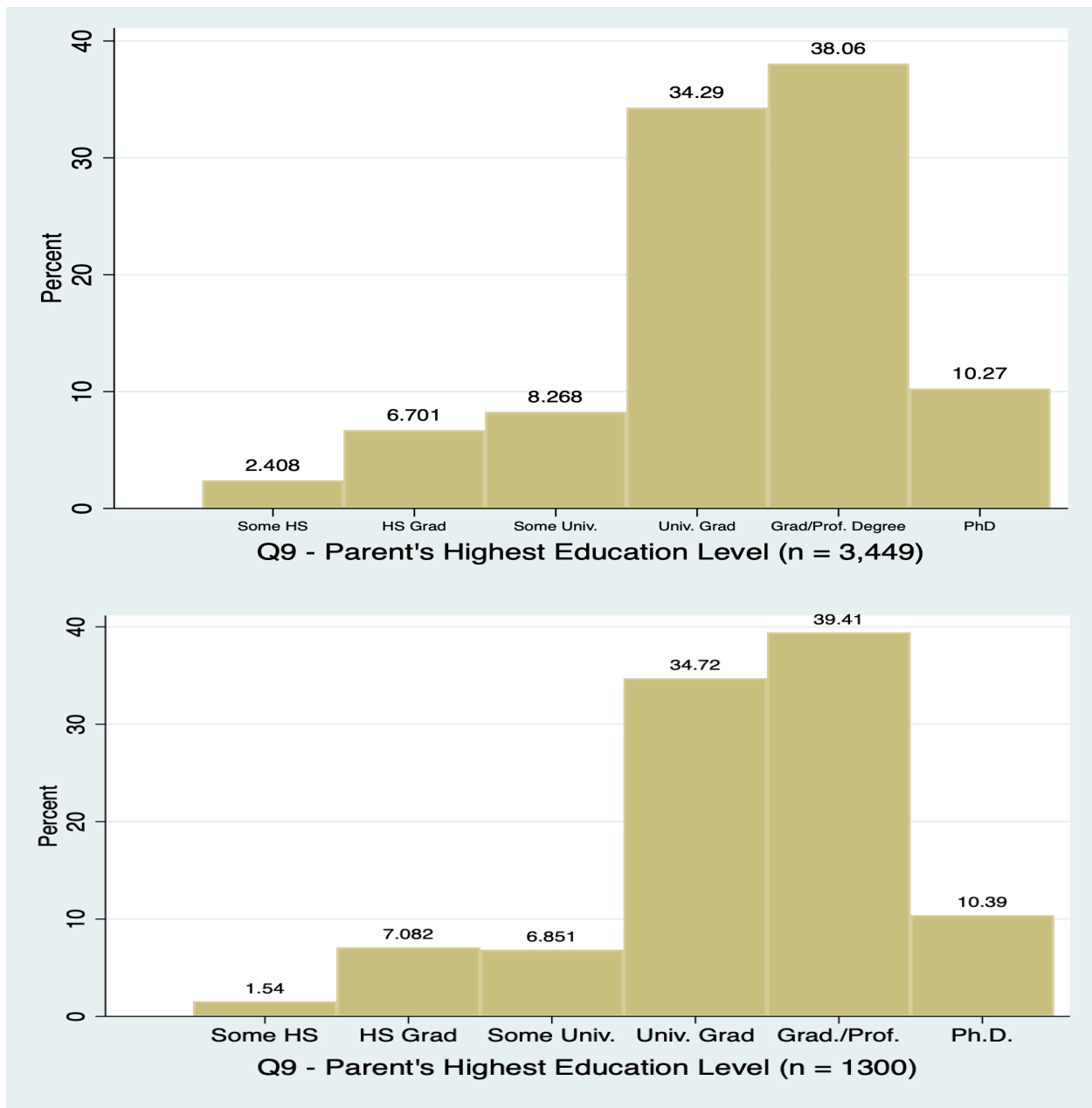


Figure 3:8 Histogram of QTS Compared to OER by Parent's Education Level

Figures 3:9 3:10, and 3:11 illustrate and compare the sample for the OER against the QTS on the demographic data concerning Political Identity. Figure 3:9 demonstrates the data proportions for each category mirror with relative symmetry. The numbers read out as follows. Those who marked “farther left” in the QTS equaled 22.5% compared to 24% in the OER. For the “left” category, QTS reported 33.5% and the OER reported 32.8%. Moving to the center,

“moderate” represented 32.9% on the QTS graph in contrast to the OER model at 29.5%. On to the “right” which showed up at 8.7% vs 10.6 on the QTS and OER respectively. Finally, the “far right” was calculated at 2.3% on the QTS and 3.0% on the OER.

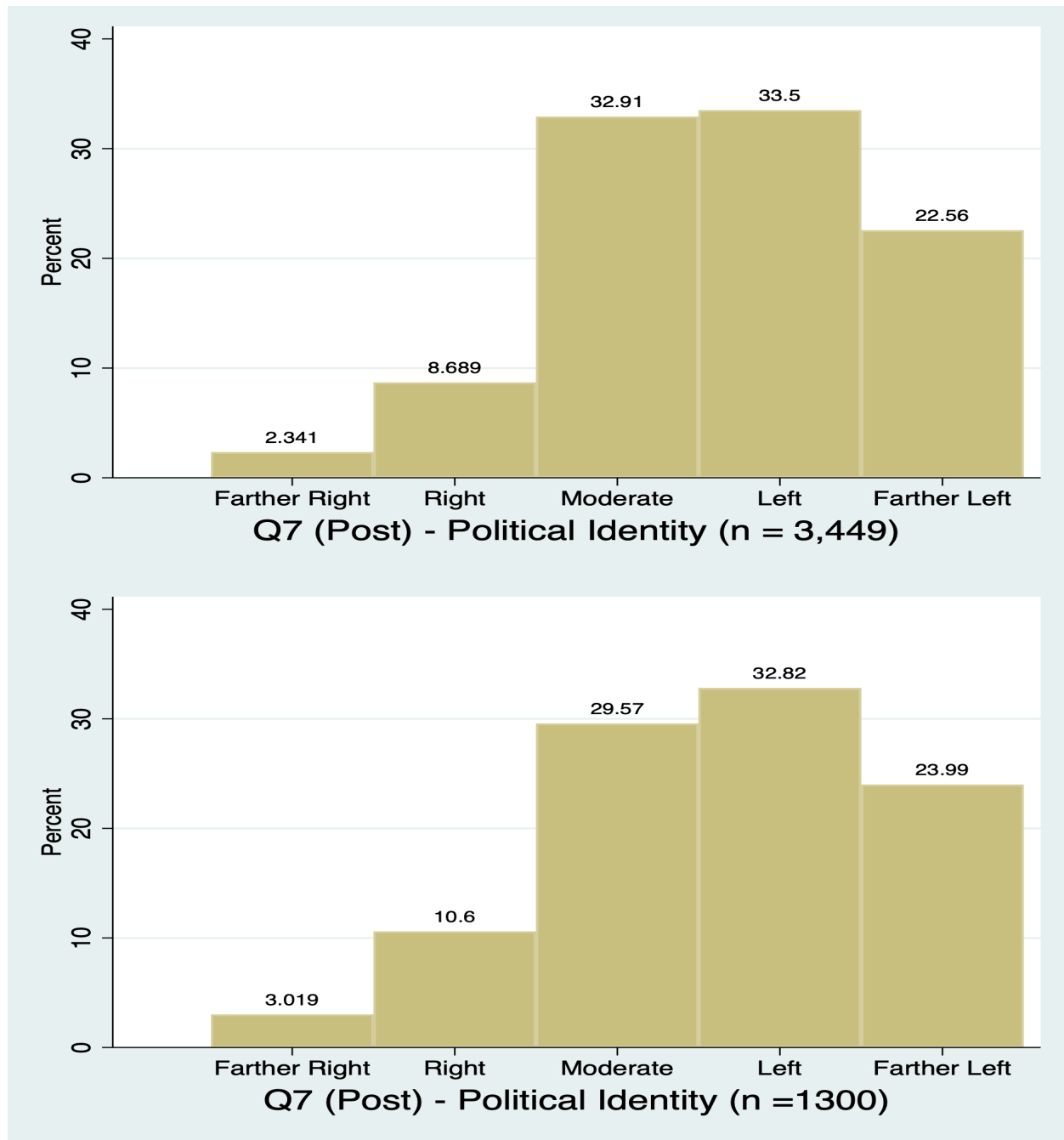


Figure 3:9 Histogram of QTS Compared to OER Sample by Political Identity

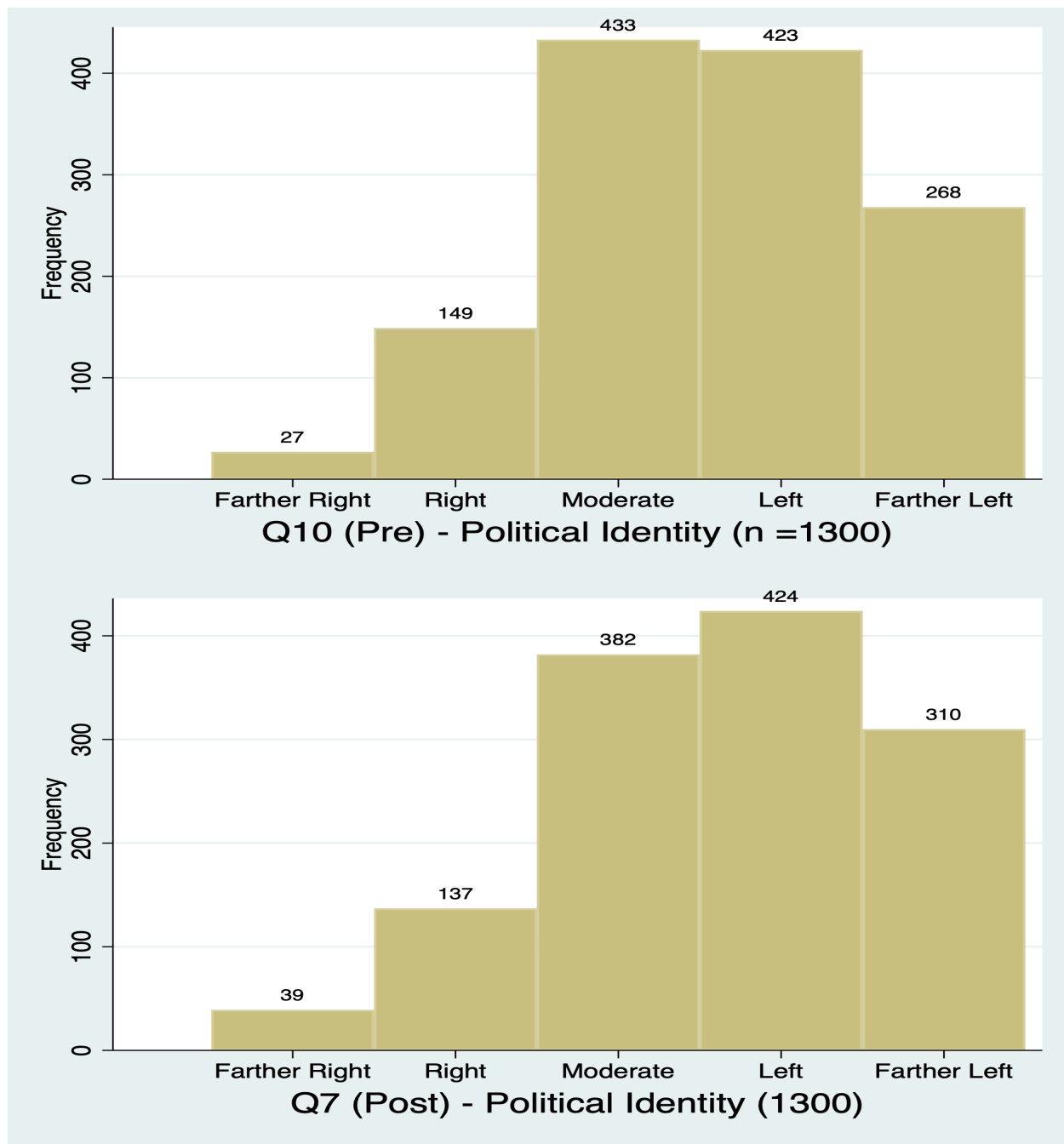


Figure 3:10 Percentages Converted to Integers for OER Sample by Political Identity

Figure 3:10 shows the same data 3:09, but in integers rather than percentages. Figure 3:11 looks only at the OER sample ($n_2 = 1300$) and compares the findings of the Political Identity data gathered on pre-survey Q10 and post-survey Q7. What the findings in Figure 3:11 reveal are that over the course of the fall semester of 2020, there was observable shifts in the Political Identity

indicator. Looking at both surveys, the representative proportions for the “right” (11%) and the “left” (32%) ranks remained stable while the primary shifts were observed at the extremes and in the center. By the end of the semester, the “farther left” bracket upticked 3.4 points to 24%, while the “moderate” bracket dipped 3.7 points to 29.6. On the “farther right” side, their representation grew by 1 point to 3%.

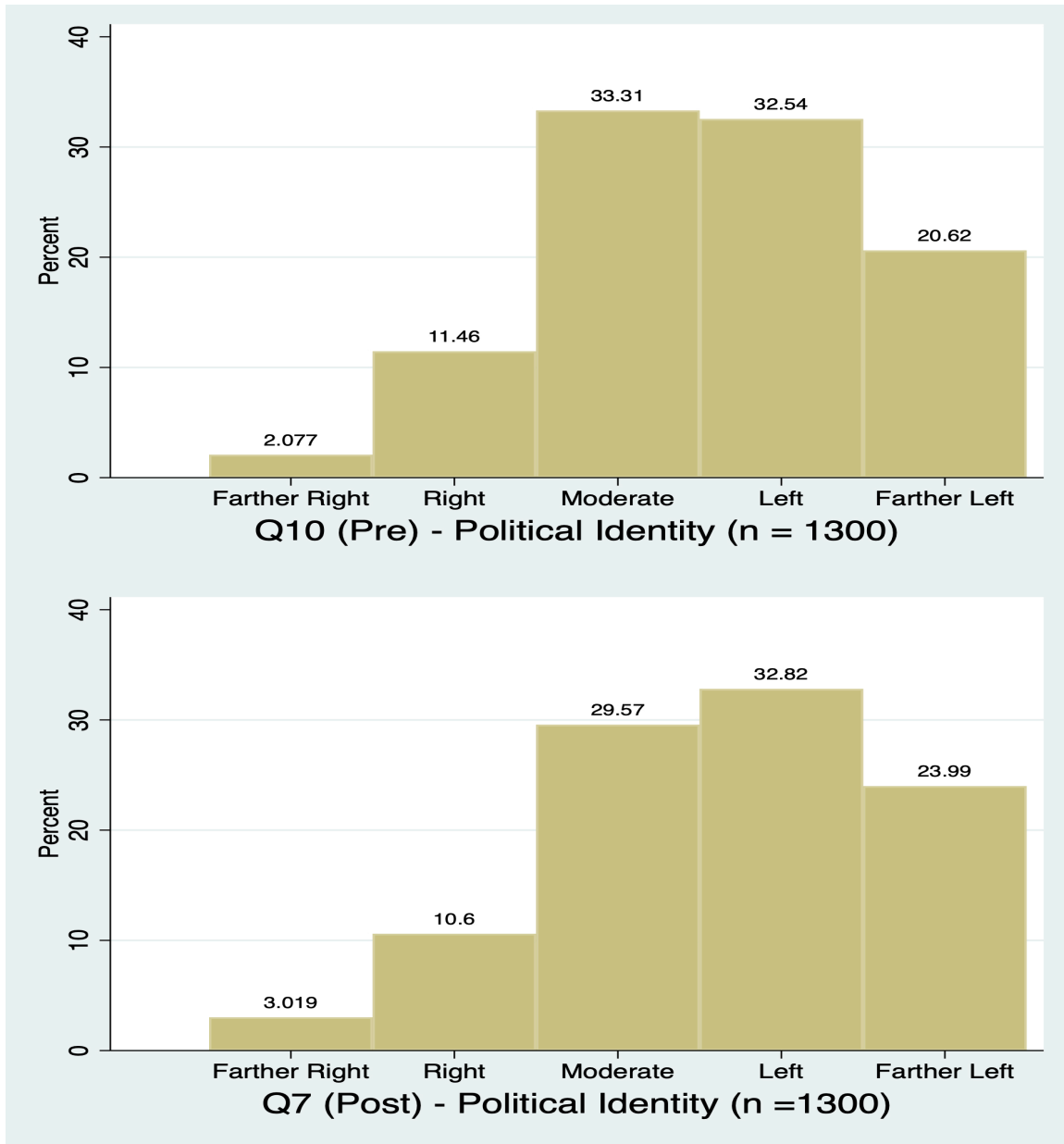


Figure 3:11 Comparing Pre- and Post-Survey Responses of OER by Political Identity

3.3 Limitations of the Study

3.3.1 Quantitative Post-Course Survey Data

After several rounds of data analysis, I noticed that the responses between the pre- and post-course survey data I was examining did not seem logical; which prompted me to wonder if the data I received upon request from a university source were compromised. I retrieved a csv file from December 2020 saved on my work laptop from my time as the TA for the ABRC. The csv document contained the post-survey data, but in a raw, uncleaned format. I compared the data on the raw csv file to the data on the cleaned, organized excel document and successfully detected and verified that the university supplied data associated with the post-course survey findings/reports had been corrupted. It was likely by human err. It would appear that the results were incorrectly transferred from the original data sources to the excel spreadsheet that was shared with me. As a consequence, it meant that I had to discard all of the comparative quantitative analysis I was conducting on select survey questions since reliable measurements of variation between the pre- and post- surveys could not be ascertained.

3.3.2 Specific Survey Items

Race/Ethnicity

Curiously, any reference to Hispanic, Latiné, or Spanish heritage was noticeably absent from the pre-survey question six: “What’s your race?” Students of families from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Brazil, and beyond were asked to choose presumably between being “Black” or “White” in terms of their racial identification—which for some may have also struck a chord evoking senses of political and/or cultural alignment, solidarity, and assimilation. The recognition

of and request for the presence of Latiné lineage in the course population was the topic of question seven: “Are you Hispanic or Latino or of Spanish Origin?”

Also of concern, were the race categories of “Black or African American” and “Asian” because neither were disaggregated. In both cases, the same problem is afoot. The great diversity of people who have been labeled “Black” from all different parts of Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean are likely to get mixed in the numbers count with African Americans. Likewise, the vast diversity of people who have been labeled “Asian” from all different parts of Asia, gets lost in this gross category. The University of Pittsburgh benefits from significantly sized populations of students from China and India. In both cases, there are many who were raised in the United States and many who were raised in China or India. These are four potential racial/ethnic identities: Chinese, Indian, Chinese-American, Indian-American. The singular category of “Asian”—without a drop-down menu of additional options—conflates and essentializes these four identities, plus several other Asian-related identities, into one voice.

Academic Class Status

After working with the pre- and post-course survey data, I realized the surveys did not ask students to identify their academic class status (fresh/soph/jr./sr. or undergrad/grad/etc.). Consequently, the quantitative course data necessarily contained survey data from all students enrolled. And although the course in anti-Black racism, PITT 0210, was designed to be a part of the first-year college experience there graduate students and university employees who took advantage of the tuition-free education in racial literacy. Initially, I thought I would only be including survey and focus group data from first year students in this study. This approach was no longer useful due the aggregated state of the survey data and the lack of a survey item asking for this detail. As a result, I included in this study, students who voluntarily enrolled in the course. I

conducted an additional focus group for voluntarily enrolled students which was composed of graduate students.

3.4 Bringing it Home: A Positionality Statement

As I mention throughout this dissertation, I served as the first Teaching Assistant for PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance. I worked in this capacity for the first two semesters of the course’s existence from August of 2020 to May of 2021. How this happened is as follows. On August 12, 2020, I received an email from the Office of the Provost which stated that I had been nominated and selected to serve as the sole teaching assistant (TA) for the newly created course on anti-Black racism. I could barely believe what I was reading. I had no idea the course existed, let alone that I was a candidate to help manage it. Suffice to say, I was completely surprised by this news. The letter explained that the course would be only one credit and completely administered online and remotely. The course would also be a graduation requirement for all entering first-year students at the University of Pittsburgh in 2020. All 5,000 of them would be auto-enrolled in the course during their first semester. And the TA would be their first point of contact.

On one hand, the news was exhilarating and intriguing and on the other, daunting and curious. My thoughts were swirling. I kept replaying the memory of the one afternoon in June—just two months prior—when I signed a petition in support of requiring coursework in Black Studies for Pitt students. I did so because I believed in that cause whole-heartedly. Yet, I did not expect to see it come to fruition during my time at Pitt. However, as life would have it, a required, university course on anti-Black racism was created and implemented immediately, and I was chosen to serve as *the* TA. It was surreal and so real.

The timing of this occurrence coincided with the writing of my comprehensive exams as well as my renewed search for a dissertation study. Like thousands of others, my original study plan had been upended by the new realities ushered into existence in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It did not take long for me to realize that the course, PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance, presented a ripe opportunity for a dissertation study. To me, there was merit and motivation in studying this unprecedented, systematic, semester-long course on the history, ideology, and forms of resistance to anti-Black racism. There was a story in how this course was called forth by the students, faculty, alumni, and community allies of Pitt, developed and delivered by “Black and Brown” Pitt faculty, and mandated by the university’s governing structure to be a free-of-charge, one-credit, graduation requirement for all incoming first-year students in the fall of 2020. Furthermore, I imagined, as the TA I would have the opportunity to be an active agent in the monumental effort, in addition to operating strictly as a scholarly investigator. In my mind, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity; as well as a *rare case*, case study.

Excitement for the overall prospects took priority over some doubts I initially had about the potential conflict of interest that functioning as a TA and [future] principal investigator might pose. Although I did not begin this dissertation study until after my tenure as TA for PITT 0210, the course anti-Black racism, was completed, the study and my positionality in it were deemed free of conflicts. I successfully defended my dissertation proposal on May 25, 2021, and received IRB approval in the fall of 2021. Since that time, I had no work affiliation with the course or the University of Pittsburgh.

On a personal and professional level, I was impressed with the university’s lightning-fast development and implementation of such a large-scale effort to advance racial literacy through

coursework in Black Studies and antiracist ethics. I perceived the greenlighting and institutionalizing of a required course in anti-Black racism to be a courageous, responsive, and profound policy move on the part of the Provost and University Senate. I recognized it as a strong, organic, and local example—or at least a momentous attempt at—what I call a *rare case* of socially responsible education (see Ch. VII for more on this). In my opinion, this was a unique and innovative academic effort, unprecedented within the landscape of North American universities, particularly among publicly funded PWIs (predominantly white institutions).

Quite naturally, the reality of this positive perspective I harbored for the ABRC influenced my researcher positionality and demonstrates a bias that I brought to the study. Likewise my previous association with the course as the TA may have also encouraged a bias in favor of the course and its potential success. Being aware of my biases and being transparent about them is an important part of the process of navigating and grappling with the non-neutrality of being human and conducting research with human beings. For better and for worse, what we think, speak, and write filters through our individualized senses. Is my researcher positionality as the former TA of PITT-0210 a limitation to this study on PITT-0210? Yes. Is it also an asset to the study? Yes. The direct access and emic knowledge I have of the subject works for and against the investigation and analyses processes. This is why this section works after the section on limitations. It could very well be included in/with the limitations of this study. On this note, Chapter III on methodology and methods comes to a close. Chapter IV explores the findings of research question one.

4.0 Chapter IV: Creation Stories

Narratives of How the ABRC Came To Be

4.1 Introduction

Now that the topics explored in this study have been (1) systematically introduced, (2) situated and contextualized within the relevant literature, and (3) methodologically outlined, the findings from each research question can be presented. The first of two research questions asks: *How was the core-curricula course, PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance, conceived, developed, and implemented, according to those closely involved?* To address the queries posed by the first research question (RQ-1) of this dissertation, semi-structured interviews (Berg, 2009) were conducted with selected individuals who contributed to the conception, development, and implementation of the course in anti-Black racism, PITT 0210.

This pool of “informants” consisted of one Pitt alumna, three Pitt professors, and three Pitt administrators. In addition to the interviews conducted, a variety of documents were sourced such as: the original petition and the official letter composed and presented by Ms. Sydney Massenberg; official, university-wide announcements, correspondence, and statements from the Chancellor and the Provost of the university; over 30 published news articles; and official course materials. These supplemental, literary artifacts were acquired, retrieved, reviewed, and analyzed to provide greater context and subtext to the subject under investigation while expanding the archive of relevant data to document more thoroughly the process of actualizing PITT 0210 – Course in Anti-Black Racism from idea to implementation.

The objective of this chapter is to present a concise, unofficial history of the ABRC, formally known as PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance—the core-

curricula course at the University of Pittsburgh . This course made U.S. history in 2020; and the significance of its existence along with the narrative of its genesis present an intriguing, noteworthy, and curious case. The story of the ABRC is a rare and remarkable one that has garnered much public recognition—at least 33 news stories in 12 months—and warrants scholarly attention and public discussion. Stories come with lessons and can be vehicles of inspiration, producing a chronicle—capturing and presenting the stories—of how the ABRC came to be can provide an immediately accessible model to other educators, administrators, advocates, and student activists interested in emulating or advancing a similar course on their campuses/in their schools. Likewise, this chapter can serve the curiosity of those simply interested in the story of the course or intrigued by the success of its process from student organizing to implementation. Just as Massenberg’s [student-initiated] petition sparked widespread interest and inspired students at other universities (e.g. Pennsylvania State University and the University of Georgia) to follow suit with similar petitions (see Appendix I for images); a brief yet firsthand, witness-based account of how this course evolved, as told by those closely involved, has its place in the present political climate, the popular imagination, as well as the archival repositories.

In this effort to reconstruct and retell the story of how the ABRC came to be, prioritizing accuracy and reliability and using the resources I had to work with, I was compelled to lead with the voices of the informants. I chose to privilege the phrasing and complete thoughts of the informants over my own story and interpretations of their testimonies. There is their story, my story, and then a constructed collaborative narrative. This is not an autoethnographic account. I want to narrate their story in their words, as much as that can be done within the constraints of academic papers of this sort. As a result there are instances of lengthy block quotes presented

throughout this chapter. This narrative practice and bracketing out my story seemed appropriate and fitting for this subject and the objectives of this chapter and research question.

Table 7 Timeline of Major Pitt/ABRC-Related Events and Publications

Date	Document/Event	Author/Person(s)	Source/Outlet
05-25-2020 – Summer 2020	Police kill George Floyd; mass protests, demonstrations & riots	--	--
06-02-2020	Statement on Racial Injustice and the Murder of Georg Floyd	Dr. Patrick Gallagher, Chancellor, U of Pitt.	U of Pitt email; PittNews Wire
06-05-2020	Petition for a 3-credit course requirement in Black Studies for all Pitt undergrads—posted	Sydney Massenberg	Change.org
06-05-2020	Letter lobbying for a 3-credit course requirement in Black Studies for all Pitt students	Sydney Massenberg	U of Pitt email
06-09-2020	Sydney presents letter and proposal at Faculty Senate Meeting; Senate votes in favor.	Sydney Massenberg & Dr. Chris Bonneau	In person
June 2020	The Office of the Provost considers the proposal and greenlights development of a course to start in August 2020	Dr. Ann Cudd, Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor, Pitt	In person
July 2020	Two working committees are formed to create a 1-CR & a 3-CR course that reflect the proposal passed by the Senate Faculty	Chair: Dr. Yolanda Covington, et al.; Chair: Dr. Alaina Roberts, et al.	In person
Aug 2020	Designing the digital delivery of the new course content of the all online, 1-credit ABR-Course	U of Pitt’s Center for Teaching & Learning	In person
08-17-2020	Letter from the Provost announced the ABRC to the Pitt Community as part of larger	Provost Cudd	U of Pitt email
08-31-2020	Inaugural ABRCourse commences	--	--
12-04-2020	Inaugural ABRCourse concludes	--	--

Table 7 highlights major Pitt-related events and publications associated with the ABRC. Table 4.1 presents a chronological matrix of major events, announcements, and publications related to the development of PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance, between May 2020 and December 2020. The timeline starts with the murder of Mr. Floyd on May

25th and the uprisings that rapidly ensued, tracks a number of significant events that transpired over the summer and fall of 2020 within the University of Pittsburgh community, and ends with the final day of the first semester of the course in anti-Black racism.

The second column of Table 7 provides an abbreviated summary of the major events that shaped the trajectory of the ABRC and will be discussed in depth over the following pages. The events listed are ones that were made public and have paper-trails, and thus provide objective markers of time and process. Much more of the story of how the ABRC came to be was not public-facing, which made the interviews with the following “insiders” extremely insightful and invaluable to this study.

4.2 Critical Context

I have learned from an extensive study of people’s history and I have observed from decades of critical observation, that women of African ascent (descent/Black) are frequently at the source, the beginning, the point of origin in many of the most significant moments, movements, and transformative ideas that have shaped the ancient and modern worlds; and at the same time, these same women are written out of history just as frequently. The story of how the ABRC came to be has the same catastrophic potential to undermine not only the presence, but the centrality, of “Black” women in this important and history-making enterprise. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to interview the woman of African ascent, Sydney Massenberg, the person I call “the catalyst”—and if this was a novel, the protagonist—of the ABRC.

Another woman of African ascent, Dr. Yolanda Covington-Ward—whom I did not have the fortune of interviewing—would be the second protagonist in the story of how the ABRC came to be. The absence of Dr. Covington-Ward’s voice in this study is not a symptom of patriarchy, sexism, anti-Blackness, or shallow scholarship as is too often the case. Rather, it is likely further

evidence of the inordinate labor demands that historically and currently fall in the care, or more viscerally, the hands, laps, arms and the backs of “Black” women. Labor demands, coupled with a humility that is willing to not take credit and attention at every opportunity—another noted hallmark of women of African ascent—are some of the realities behind reasons for why Dr. Covington-Ward was unable to schedule an interview during the spring of 2022 for this study. The absence of her voice in this dissertation is a limitation to this story, yet her name is lifted and cemented here, not only by my words but by the words of her colleagues.

Women of African ascent being recognized, respected, engaged, and cited fairly in all instances is the point of emphasis. Creating opportunities for these same women to tell the very stories they co-author or feature in is imperative, and honest. Indeed, the story of how the ABRC came to be is the people’s story, involving a complex of persons, politics, and phenomena; and at the same time, it is Sydney’s story. Ms. Massenberg’s testimony is ground zero, the foundation on which this story, organized using metaphors of the human life cycle as thematic titles, builds.

4.3 The Setting: Lockdown Inside an “Anti-Nigga Machine”

The spring and summer of 2020 was an unforgettable time, indeed; as anyone who remembers it and who survived it may attest. Across the United States, schools and jobsites were closed or operating in low mode-high alert capacities. Most large-scale graduations were scaled down to skeleton size or conducted online. At the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), students had been away from campus since the week of spring break in mid-March. For the vast majority of the world, it was the season of “the [COVID-19] pandemic.” For the vast majority of the “Black world”, it was the season of “the double pandemic.” In addition to the global outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, which impacted seemingly everyone, the conditions created in response to it proved to be especially fatal in racially minoritized, marginalized, and resource-deprived communities.

Beyond the already disproportionate access to services such as healthcare coverage, which were overrun and overwhelmed with drama, trauma, and death, there was the panic-induced hoarding that ensued in the face of the already disproportionate re/distribution of goods, exacerbated by transnational shifts, stalls, and stoppages in global supply chains. Not to be forgotten or taken for granted was the disproportionate representation of so-called “essential” workers from im/migrant families and communities of African ascent (Black and Brown) being put into harm’s way to earn wages. As many observed and lamented, the only thing that did not slow down during the lockdown was the open hunting season on “Black bodies” by white policemen and vigilantes enacting extreme forms of anti-Black violence, bias, and racism. Taken together, with other factors, these conditions inspired the declaration of a “double pandemic”.

Whether on “Lockdown”, in a pandemic, or fighting a World War, it matters not in the United States. This place has not been a safe space for people of African ascent since the settler colonists from England and robber-barons of Europe invaded what some Indigenous people of “North America” call “Turtle Island”. In 1990, the hip-hop group, Public Enemy, released an album entitled: *Fear of a Black Planet*. On the song called, “Anti-Nigger Machine”, rapper, Chuck D explains the anti-Black violence plaguing Black people across the United States.

*This is what I mean a (sic) anti-nigga machine
Instead of peace, the police
Just wanna wreck and flex on the kid
What I did was try to be the best
So they fingered the trigger
Figured I was a bigger nigga
And they started to search me
So I headed West
Went to Cali a rally
Was for a brother's death
It was the fuzz who shot him*

With anti-Black death comes Black birth, resurrected and new. With anti-Black oppression comes Black resistance, tried and true. Through resistance to oppression, comes liberation. Through resistance to death, come resurrections, transformations, and new formations. The story of the ABRC is a story of resistance and new formations; and is among the latest in a long list of events that demonstrates the palpability and accuracy of the following assessment: “To reform, or more fundamentally revolutionize, the core purpose and intended audience of higher education, student pushback and protest has been crucial” (Patel, 2021, p. 134).

On the following pages, the story of the ABRC is collected and threaded through the voices of those closest to it—those who conceived it, nurtured it, produced it, delivered it, guided it, and continue to steward it.

4.4 Part I: “Inception” - How it all Began...

“I had just graduated from Pitt. I was in the class without a graduation; the class of 2020 ... virtual graduation,” recalled Sydney Massenberg as she reflected on her memories of May 2020 and the events that led up to the ABRC. “I think at that point, there was just a lot going on in current events” and due to the national lockdown of that spring and summer, “I was just sitting at home” she continued. “I’m someone who very closely follows the current events, reads articles, and is on Twitter seeing what’s going on every day.” Yet, being “stuck at home with not much to do became overwhelming for me,” admitted Massenberg. Like the majority of the 330 million U.S. Americans, Massenberg was enduring the federally mandated quarantine issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. “And then,” she added, “of course everything happened with George Floyd and prior, Breonna Taylor.” Mr. Floyd was fatally suffocated by police officers on May 25, 2020, and Ms. Taylor was fatally shot by police officers on March 13, 2020.

While others may have stopped there, Massenberg proceeded, and shared something that signaled her relationship to Pittsburgh and in a way, paid tribute to one of its sons. “And I think also just living in Pittsburgh for four years, we also saw Antwon Rose be killed and the really problematic response of the Pittsburgh police and University.” Antwon Rose, II was a 17-year-old African American male fatally shot by an East Pittsburgh policeman on June 19, 2018. Rose was a poet, took AP courses in school, and was unarmed—which seems to matter not to typical police officers when confronting suspects who are visibly non-white and/or perceived as Black. On further thought, confronting becomes an arguable word-choice in this case, and others in fact, because he Antwon Rose was running away from a confrontation. The officer shot Rose in the back from a nonconfrontational distance.

“When there were conflicts with police membership there (in Pittsburgh), we saw really problematic responses,” revealed Massenberg. “So I guess at that point, I just felt like this can't be an optional thing anymore,” she continued. “We can't just make it optional for people to learn about how these systems play into how something like this could happen to George Floyd and all the other tons of Black people this has happened to in the past and non-Black people this has happened to in the past,” said Massenberg. “I think I [commented] on a post on Facebook or somewhere,” she continued. “And I replied to my friend who posted it and said this is terrible! And as we were talking about it, I said that I'm thinking of saying something to the university.”

Like many of the student movements on university campuses in the 1960s and early 1970s which sprouted out of a response to state-sanctioned, anti-Black violence, Massenberg was sparked to action in the wake of the brutal police execution of Mr. George Perry Floyd, following that of Breonna Taylor. In the next excerpt, Massenberg explained how the spark ignited into a flame. “Then my professor, Chris Bonneau—he was the Inside Out professor—he responded. And he was

like, “Whatever you want to send, send it to me first.” And like, “I can help you workshop it before you send it.” said Massenberg. Not only was Bonneau an enthusiastic supporter of what Massenberg was proposing, “he was” as she added, “the Faculty Senate President. So, he had a little bit of leeway within the administration to help me with that.”

Enter Chris Bonneau, professor of Political Science and University Senate President 2018-2021. “I teach a variety of courses in American politics,” began Bonneau. “Most relevant, I teach a course on mass incarceration, which is a class that is generally taught inside of a correctional institution where I bring 16 Pitt students into a correctional institution. And we hold class with 16 incarcerated students.” Bonneau said “most relevant” because this was the course in which Massenberg was enrolled during the 2019-2020 academic year. “The incarcerated students and Pitt students do the same assignments. They each get credits for their work and everything else,” explained Bonneau.

When reflecting on the spring of 2020 and how the ABRC came to be, Bonneau echoed some of the same points Massenberg mentioned, and brought much from his perspective. “[In the] spring of 2020, we had just shut down the university with COVID. And so really, we were in a hair-on-fire situation, and then George Floyd was murdered at the end of May,” Bonneau recalled. “And that event...” he paused for a few seconds, “it’s hard for me to describe why it was that event and not any other times we’ve seen police officers murder Black people.” Bonneau pondered, “Maybe it was because the indifference the officer showed. Maybe it was because, *I can’t breathe!*” Bonneau knew he could abridge that last statement and be understood.

“I can’t breathe” is a phrase that went viral a second time, after the murder of George Floyd and evolved into one of the rallying cries for activists, demonstrators, sympathizers, and protestors in solidarity with the #BLM movement and/or the Floyd family. The phrase was *viralized* and

crystallized in the public consciousness because the video of this prolonged street-execution, courageously recorded by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier on her cellphone, captured Mr. Floyd using the last breaths in his lungs to cry these words more than 20 times while grasping for air under the knee of the police officer who murdered this 46-year-old, 223-pound, six feet – four inches tall, father of five. With grave horror alongside an abiding sense of deep reverence, it is necessary to remember that this terrifying phrase was uttered nine times by Mr. Eric Garner, six years prior as the 43-year-old, 350-plus-pound, six-feet – three-inches tall, father of six, was strangled under the chokehold of a police officer in Staten Island, New York. The details are important to exemplify the extent of the similarities between these two dreadful scenes.

Bonneau continued to ponder: “Maybe it was the confluence of all these things reaching a boiling point. But whatever it was, *that* (emphasis added) was a catalytic event for awareness across the country, and Sydney and I.” There it is, that word, “catalytic”; and Sydney Massenberg was, in my words, the “catalyst” of the ABRC—to speak broadly yet accurately. “She’s a former student [of mine/my courses] twice; top [student] at the NYU law school, and my most accomplished former student”, said Bonneau without a hint of hesitation.

Certainly, there is something special about Ms. Sydney Massenberg. The words of others confirm it, yet her actions speak for themselves and do so voluminously. Still, as words are the primary medium in this dissertation, they will be relied upon to demonstrate Massenberg’s brave actions and dynamic intelligence. Providing some context about how she ultimately arrived at the conclusion to “do something about it”, Ms. Massenberg explained the kind of person and student she knows herself to be: “And for me, because I chose to pay attention and chose to learn about these things, it just felt frustrating, because I was able to make those choices.” By “choices”, Massenberg was referring to courses like the ones she took with Bonneau (discussed above) and

with Alaina Roberts in Africana Studies (discussed below) that allowed students to deeply engage with social justice, systemic oppression, structural violence, and forms of racial and critical literacies. continued: “And I’m happy that I could,” Massenberg acknowledged, “but I knew that a lot of people wouldn’t, and not even necessarily maliciously, but just because it just might not be something very pressing to a lot of people.” Exemplifying both her remarkable empathy and resolve, Massenberg continued: “But for people to learn about these systems in an optional way, just didn’t seem like something that should be the case. So, that’s why I decided to do something about it. Writing the letter was my first course of action after I texted a few friends. That’s what I came to.”

That *is* what Ms. Massenberg came to, and that is how *it* came to be. It being the organic, bottom-up, student-led, moment—if not movement—that was catalytic for the creation and quick implementation of a course in anti-Black racism. Dr. Bonneau recalled a pivotal text chat he had with Massenberg following her decision to make a move. “And we text back and forth and she said, “There really should be a gen-ed class. Like an anti-Black racism class.” I said, “That sounds great. I’m happy to help.” And she’s like, “Well, what if we did a petition?” Bonneau liked the idea and assured Massenberg, “If we do a petition or whatever else, I can get it through.” “Because as faculty senate president, I control the agenda, I can get this through.”

“So I put the petition up and sent the letter probably within minutes of one another,” recalled Massenberg. Figure 4.1 (on the following page) displays images of the petition Massenberg published on the Change.org website on Friday, June 5, 2020. See Appendix A for a readable version of the full document.

Attached to the petition was the official letter Massenberg penned to the senior leadership at the University of Pittsburgh. The letter could also be described as a proposal or a formal demand.

A link to this letter was included with the script that explained the cause and rationale of the petition.

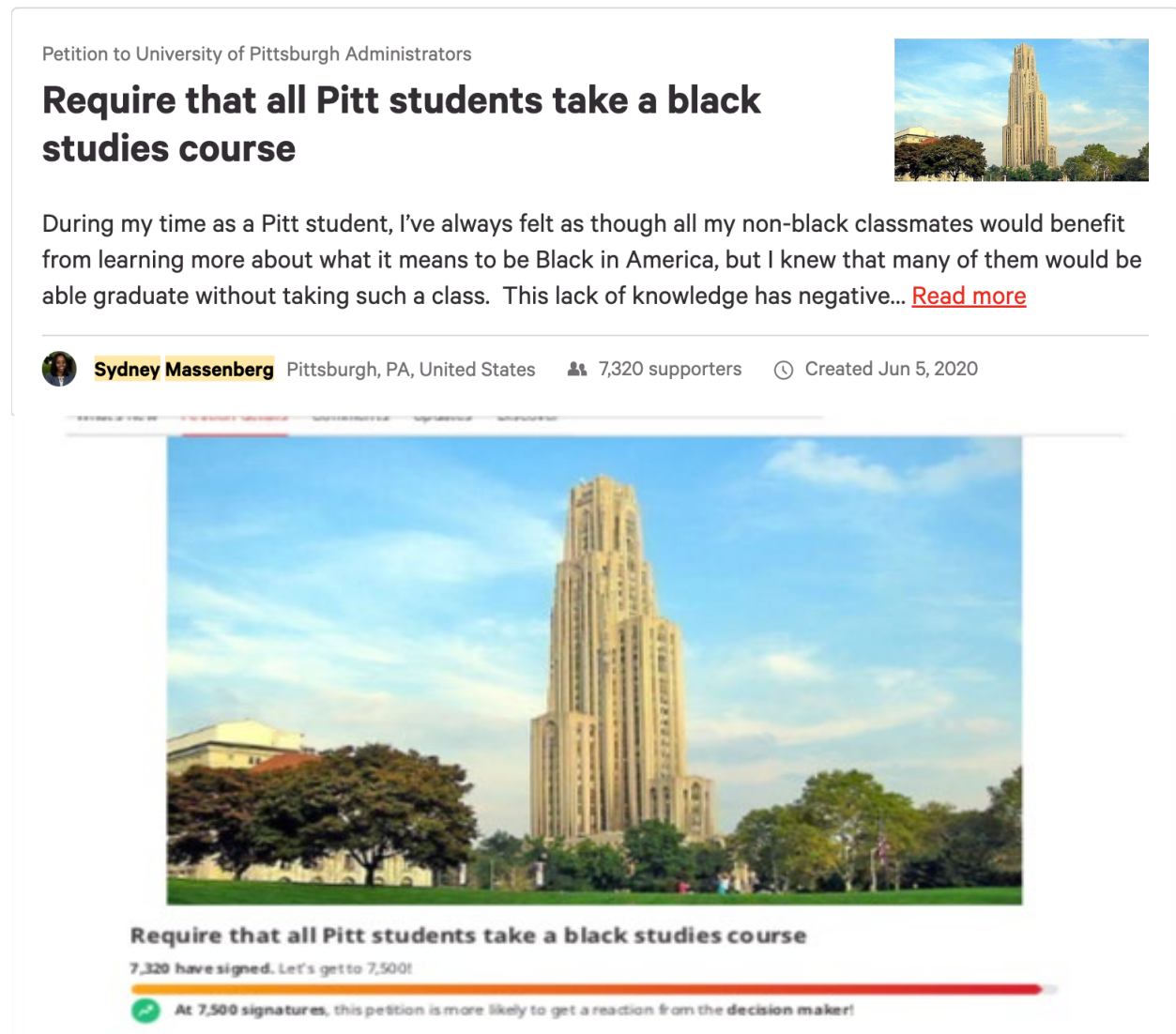


Figure 4:1 Petition Created/Uploaded By Massenberg; Hosted on Change.Org

Figure 4.2 (presented on the following page) displays an image of the official letter Massenberg submitted. See Appendix B for a readable version of the full document. Figure 4.3 (on the following page) highlights two excerpts from the letter that capture and contextualize the main concerns of this correspondence.

Not only is the lack of White participation noticeable, but that lack of knowledge becomes very visible when our White counterparts make comments in other classes that are plainly misinformed, ignorant, and often offensive. With this letter I would like to discuss the effects of students lacking historical and cultural competencies, and a step the University might consider taking toward remedying this.

I am calling for all undergraduate students – regardless of the area of study - to be required to take at LEAST one course focusing on the Black experience as part of university degree requirements.

Figure 4:2 Excerpts From Massenberg’s Letter to Pitt Senior Leadership

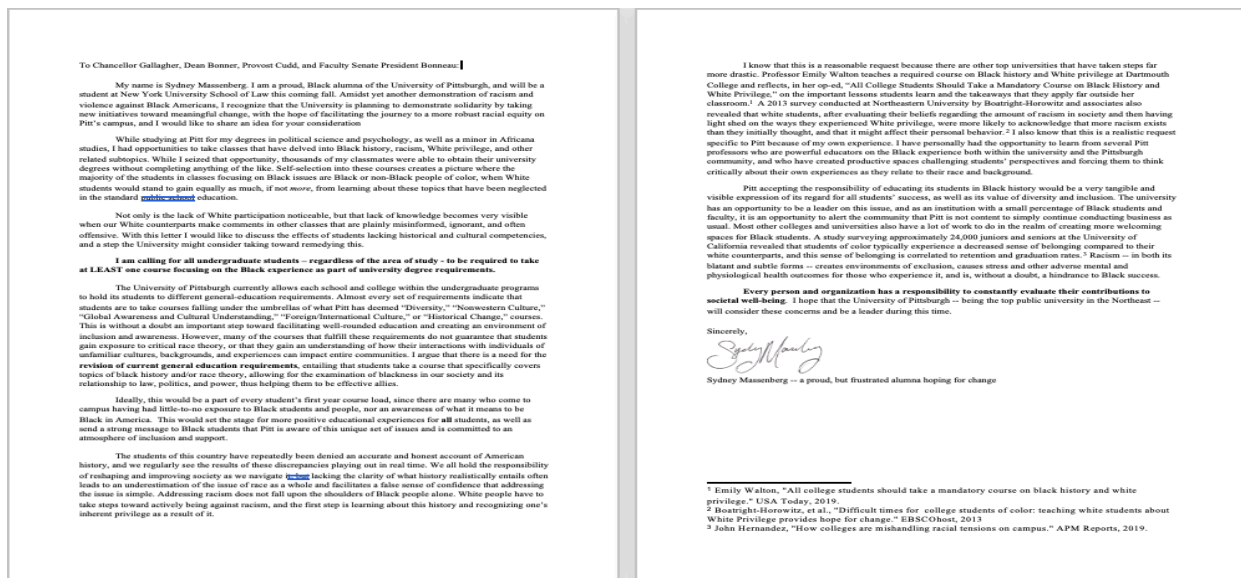


Figure 4:3 Image of Official Letter From Massenberg to Senior Leadership of Pitt

"I'm very present on most of my social media, especially my Twitter," Massenberg said. "So, I posted it on my social media and people picked it up really quickly, because I have a lot of followers just from college and high school, my hometown." Massenberg emphasized the importance of networks and communities at every stage of the process. "And my friends were just really critical in sharing it to their social media as well. And that immediately created exponential growth in who [saw] it," she explained. "And of course my professor, Dr. Bonneau, I think shared it on his Facebook and Twitter or whatever he uses; and Dr. Roberts also." This organic, double-pronged approach which simultaneously engaged folks on the ground ("the grassroots"/the public)

and folks in the tower (“the power structure”/the leadership) proved to be extraordinarily successful. In just a few days, the petition surpassed its original goal of 5,000 signatures and its author was summarily summoned to “hold court” on its behalf.

“And then,” in Massenberg’s words: “because I was working, I had Bonneau on my side helping me navigate this all. I think I sent the letter. He got the email and then he asked me if I wanted to come to the Faculty Senate meeting to present it, as well.” All of this happened rapidly, within a week. “I think I sent the letter on Thursday or Friday, and the meeting was the next Wednesday or something,” recalled Massenberg.

History professor, Dr. Alaina Roberts—mentioned several times by Massenberg already—remembered the story of the petition and the process that followed in this way: “I only knew about the petition when she posted it on Twitter. The same day or a day after I first saw her tweet about the petition, I messaged her on Twitter, and I was like, hey, this is amazing. Good for you. I’m so proud of you.” Then, Roberts echoed something Massenberg told me in our interview and consistently stated in other articles. “And she was like,” recalled Roberts, “your class was the inspiration for this. I really appreciated the way we talked about racism. And I wish that other students had the ability to do that.” Naturally, Roberts was touched by Massenberg’s enthusiastic testimony, as the next part of her story indicated. “And so basically from that point on,” said Roberts, “when she told me that I had a hand in this kind of unknowingly. I felt a responsibility to help her in any way I could, and to help this kind of petition.”

Bonneau provided some rich details about the next part of the process. “So, the idea was to have a mandatory gen-ed class, three credits. And so, we drew up a proposal and they took the lead and then went through some editing and so on.” The *they* Bonneau referred to were

Massenberg and a few friends and colleagues she consulted while crafting the proposal and petition.

“I had her present it before the faculty assembly and answer questions from people on just the concept, not the particulars, because the particulars, get into the weeds,” explained Bonneau. Ultimately, “It passed. I believe it was unanimous. Not sure,” he said, which pairs with Massenberg’s memory of the event’s outcome: “I think they had to vote at some point about whether or not to move forward with this. And almost everybody voted in support.”

After presenting at the Faculty Senate meeting in Pittsburgh, Massenberg returned to her home in northern New Jersey—where she had been situated unexpectedly since spring break—to continue her work obligations and preparations for law school. However, her active communication with Dr. Roberts and Dr. Bonneau kept her in the loop of what was transpiring in the meetings that started to occur after the proposal was passed. Still there were stretches of relative silence from all other potential sources. “And then all of a sudden, I heard they decided that they would be creating a new class,” recalled Massenberg. “I heard about that happening, but I felt like when it was finally official, I hadn’t heard about it for weeks. Then all of a sudden, there was a new class that existed. So it was a lot of silence-ish.”

Here again, Bonneau’s interview provided the relevant details to furnish further clarity surrounding the bureaucratic processes running in the background. “After it goes to Faculty Senate, it goes to Senate Council, which has administration, students, faculty, and staff on it”, explained Bonneau. “So what I wanted to do was have this endorsed and then I would send it to the educational policies committee, who’s responsible for overseeing gen-eds and everything else. And they could work on getting this done with the provost office.” That was the plan as Bonneau described it. And things were moving forward unencumbered because as Bonneau explained, “we

had a lot of support from the administration on this, so we passed it” and the committee processes began. However, “In the meantime,” Bonneau continued, “there was a thought of, well, What can we do now? How can we capitalize on this momentum?” which led to the thoughts: “Can we do something quickly?” and “Can we do something involving a one credit module?”, as Bonneau recalled. “And that's where the idea of the one credit, pass, fail that everybody would be automatically enrolled in, asynchronous class and so on... came [from]” explained the professor. “That [course] was never intended to serve as the end all be all; but [in] creating a new gen-ed major, there's bureaucracy. There's all kinds of steps to go through.”

Later in the interview, while discussing process, Bonneau offered the following comments that seem fitting to include here. “Fortunately I was in a position where I could help the students, because this is a student-initiated idea, but students don't know how things work”, said the political scientist. “They don't know how the institution works. They don't know the process. And so it was fortunate that I was able to help with that, I knew how to do the logistics of it and get it through.” Not only does Bonneau know the institutional processes, the president of the University Senate (during that time) he was a key driver, a power broker, a principal constituent of the institutional structure and bureaucratic processes.

As Provost and Senior Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Ann Cudd is the highest-ranking academic officer and the chief administrator responsible for greenlighting, funding, and managing PITT 0210: The Course in Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology & Resistance. Considering her relationship to the course, Provost Cudd provided a host of intricate details and comprehensive descriptions about the ABRC, from conception to the present day. In the following passage, she recollected details from the first stages during the summer of 2020.

Okay. So, recall July of 2020 and the Black Lives Matter Movement in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and many others, and the obvious need for institutions of all kinds to start, or to up their game in terms of reckoning with the racial injustice. And that, to me seemed like, and was brought home to me by many people who spoke to our institution, to the leaders in our institution, that we need to do a better job of educating people about the history of anti-Black racism; of understanding the longstanding structural inequities in society. So that it was more understandable to all Americans, not just to all of our students, why there was such injustice and violence against Black people, and the legacy of all of the inequities, injustices, and violence, and what that meant for our students, our communities today.

Considering the multiple-layers and forms of sensitivity fastened to her title and duties, as well as her unparalleled proximity to and power over the ABRC, I was particularly moved by Provost Cudd's candor, detail, and transparency. "Also as the Provost," she continued, "of course, I was receiving lots of input from especially Black students, Black alumni, Black faculty and staff. Among those things, was the letter from the recent graduate, Sydney, who asked for a three-credit history course required of all students. And of course, as a chief academic officer," explained Provost Cudd, "I knew I would play a role or could play a role in maybe motivating that or getting it going or something." Although the provost expressed an interest in supporting the idea of a three-credit course, she added: "But, over the summer, that was a very short period of time to try to get something done quickly, but it seemed like it was urgent to do something now, at least to show that we care, that we take this seriously and so forth."

The first steps in taking it seriously went public in early June in the form of a public statement. On June 2, seven days after the murder of George Floyd and subsequent explosion of

demonstrations, protests, and rebellions, Dr. Patrick Gallagher, the Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh released a public letter entitled: “Statement on Racial Injustice and the Death of George Floyd”. Figure 4.4 (on the following page) presents an image of the letter. For a legible version of the chancellor’s statement in full, see Appendix C. The chancellor’s statement to the university community, which was quickly picked up by the local press, joined a wave of formal letters and public statements from university heads, in response to the public outcry spawned by the incidents surrounding the execution of George Perry Floyd. Although it was addressed to “Members of the University Community”, much of it was directed to the African American community within the university. In several short paragraphs, Chancellor Gallagher (1) acknowledged the ongoing racial travesties and social responses to it; (2) expressed contempt for the racial violence; (3) emphasized a stance of solidarity with African American students, faculty, staff, and alumni; (4) acknowledged Pitt’s role in “perpetuating unfair structures and systems”; and (5) announced the planning of virtual meetings to share antiracist “ideas, experiences, and expertise.” The letter did not include the concrete language of material commitments or policy changes.



Figure 4:4 Chancellor’s Statement on Racial Injustice and the Death of George Floyd

On that same day—June 2, 2020—about two hours after the chancellor’s statement arrived in the email inboxes of the 65,000+ constituents (not including alumni) of the University of Pittsburgh, a public statement (shown on the following page) from Provost Cudd followed.



Dear Panther Nation,

These are dark and difficult days. In the midst of a global pandemic, unprecedented in any of our lifetimes, we are witnessing again the all too common horror of police brutality and racist attacks against African Americans. The killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, like so many before them, send the false and racist message that Black lives do not matter. We must work to right that wrong.

I am always concerned about the well-being of everyone in the Pitt community. But as our campus strives to reopen in this new era of wearing masks and keeping our distance in a time of turbulence, I am especially concerned about our students, faculty, and staff members of color. Please know that University leadership cares deeply about your health and safety. We stand together against racist violence and injustice.

Our mission of education and research offers a way forward through these deeply challenging times. As educator and activist Mary McLeod Bethune once wrote, "Knowledge is the prime need of the hour." When protests wane, it will be important to continue to intensify our critical understanding of the roots of racism, violence, and oppression. Just as our biomedical researchers are rushing to find a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, our social scientists and humanist scholars must continue their work to further our understanding, sharpen our critique, and offer solutions to longstanding racism, white supremacy, and police misconduct.

We are—and must be first and foremost—an inclusive, equitable, and caring community of scholars, learners, teachers, and colleagues. Working together in mutual recognition of the dignity and equal moral worth of each of us, we can overcome any scourge of the body or the soul. Let us work for justice that we may flourish in peace and health.

In solidarity,

Ann

Ann E. Cudd
Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

Figure 4:5 A Message From Provost Ann E. Cudd on June 2, 2020

In notable ways, the provost's letter was similar to, distinct from, and more succinct than the chancellor's. The provost began in a comparable fashion and [also] specifically addressed "our students, faculty, and staff members of color". Her letter, addressed to the "Panther Nation", emphasized "care", foremost; and unknowingly forecasted the ABRC with this sentence: "When

protests wane, it will be important to continue to intensify our critical understanding of the roots of racism, violence, and oppression.” Figure 4:5 presents a legible version of the statement from Provost Cudd.

To keep the facts straight, these two letters were published three-days prior to the posting of the petition and proposal, even though they are presented here, after the latter. Thus, these messages from Pitt’s top leadership and Massenberg’s proposal to Pitt’s leadership are independent of each other—mutually exclusive—yet tied by fate, timing, and context.

“So it was following the hundreds of statements from university professors and provosts and deans that all in some fashion decried anti-Black racism. It was a response to an uprising about anti-Black racism and also about the police, and that there was a global uprising” explained Leigh Patel, Professor of Education. “So it was in response to that; those hundreds of letters from university presidents, provosts, and deans,” she continued. “Most of those letters addressed anti-Black racism while very few named law enforcement. That uprising was about the delivery system that law enforcement serves in terms of delivering anti-Black racism, of delivering misogynoir.”

At the request of Dr. Yolanda Covington-Ward, Dr. Patel joined the faculty committee that met weekly during the summer of 2020 to “conceptualize the scope and sequence of the modules of the course.” Professor Patel delivered the video-lecture for the module on addressing anti-Black racism through housing and how that intertwines with education. Later in the interview, Patel added, “[Frederick]Douglas reminds us that power concedes nothing without a demand. So these letters that were written and the course that was conceptualized came out of a global demand for the cessation of anti-Black racism and violence and the cessation of cops being the primary delivery vehicle for that.” Patel’s comments echoed—and are richly illuminated by—some of the analysis she advanced in her 2021 text: *No Study Without Struggle*. In one passage, Patel argued

that it is “when the preferred public images of universities are infringed upon, such as through student protest that exposes how students often face discrimination based on race, gender, or ability” that the difference becomes obvious between the minority of “transformative leaders” and the majority of school leaders “more interested in the image of equity and their school’s ranking rather than the complicated work of confronting inequities” (p. 131). “When these collisions of reputation and public protest occur, universities react...” (p. 131); and not always in ways we anticipate. The University of Pittsburgh administration was unique in its reaction. And as a consequence, the ABRC came to be.

Dr. Roberts expressed that she “was actually very proud of Pitt for moving so fast and saying: ‘Hey, we have now an impetus to create something like this.’ That is responding immediately to current events; but also to one of our alumna, who is kind of forcing us from a PR standpoint, I suppose, to at least respond to this.” Likewise, Dr. Michael Bridges recalled: “I was pretty excited. I thought that the Provost had leveraged a real opportunity. I have a lot of respect for the Provost in saying, ‘We’re going to offer this course and... [make it happen]’.”

4.5 Part II: “Gestation” - The Process

“The process was very much ad hoc, right?”, remarked Provost Cudd. “I thought that the moment demanded that, but not every moment would support [that]. It was the urgency of the moment of the summer of 2020, that I think allowed me to, as an administrator, top-down kind of impose this.” To say ‘context is everything’ is to underscore the notion that context is crucial, critical, and key to clearly comprehend any situation. I mention this because so much of what the provost stated exemplified the relevance of this perspective. “Clearly, I did impose something on the first-year students of the university and that normally that doesn’t happen. So, I had to sort of spend some political capital to make that happen” she admitted. “It was worth it” she concluded:

Cudd provided rich and precise details on the administrative processes undertaken to materialize [what began as] student, community, local, and nationwide calls for immediate, school-based actions centered on advancing racial literacy, justice, and equity, into [what would eventually become] PITT 0210: The Course in Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, & Resistance. “So, I conferred with a few people, including the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Kathleen Blee, who had participated in a one credit course on Antisemitism—the semester after the Tree of Life massacre.” Here, Provost Cudd was referring to the mass shooting at Tree of Life – Or L’Simcha Congregation synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA on October 27, 2018, when a lone gunman killed 11 people. “And that” referring to the one-credit course on Antisemitism “had gone very well. And she reminded me of that. And that gave me the idea that, well, we maybe could stand up such a course very quickly, if we had a motivated group of faculty to do so” the provost explained. “So, I conferred further with her because she, of course, has the faculty who would be maybe the most likely to lead such a thing. And she right away pointed to Yolanda Covington-Ward as the natural leader, she’s the chair of Africana Studies.”

“She”—speaking of Dr. Covington-Ward—“is certainly somebody who would at least have the right idea of who I should contact. So, I contacted her and I asked her would she be willing to help us out and lead a course, develop a course somehow,” recalled Provost Cudd. “And I was willing to help her”, she continued, “in any way that she thought necessary to develop a course that would be a one credit course that would be free for all incoming students. And that we would find a way for all of the students to take this course.” Staying with transparency, the provost remembered that “Initially, she pushed back quite a bit. She negotiated very nicely. And then agreed to do it” Cudd recalled. “She really wanted to know whether I was serious about this; whether I would invest in this. Was this just a passing idea? Was I going to commit institutional

resources? And more than that, my political capital, if you will, to backing this course”, said the provost.

Provost Cudd went on to say that Dr. Covington-Ward “had some real concerns about if it were to be an in-person class, how instructors might be treated by students who did not have this information yet. And had not studied the history of anti-Black racism; and who might be racist... I mean, might be a white supremacist and how that would be traumatic for them.” Discussing issues like these with Dr. Covington-Ward led the two of them to “agree that this would be a synchronous online course. So, that would allow interaction with the TA, but not in person discussions”, said Cudd. “We agreed that it would be one credit, which was also true of the Antisemitism course. But that course was in person because it was before the pandemic, right?, And we weren't used to doing these things remotely”, the provost observed before adding: “And we basically had to do it remotely in the fall of 2020 anyway.”

In her role of “initiating and supporting”, Provost Cudd “also marshaled resources from the Center for Teaching and Learning,” charging them with the unprecedented task “to technologically put it together and to get instructional designer support for it, because it's online.” Cue, Dr. Michael Bridges, [at the time of these interviews] the interim executive director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, who was largely involved in coordinating and facilitating the production and presentation of the lectures from the individual faculty members, and in the design and structure of the course within the LMS (Learning Management System—Canvas. “It was a course that was delivered completely remotely, asynchronously. So we needed to have a platform to do that. That was Canvas”, explained Dr. Bridges. “And so in a relatively short period of time, we had to essentially develop, build all of the content that was outlined. If you think of the syllabus as being the blueprint,” Bridges, explained, “we had to build the house that was associated with

that blueprint.” The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) team, comprised mainly of Bridges, Dr. Andrew Bentley, and Dr. Lisette Muñoz Rojas (who joined in the spring semester of 2021), were responsible for contacting and “scheduling the individual faculty members who would deliver the module videos; working with them on scripting those; and identifying the learner objectives associated with each one of the modules to provide some consistency and some structure across the elements of the course”, Dr. Bridges explained. Covering all of the details he could remember, Bridges added: “Then, working with the TA and bringing [on] some of our educational technology support people. Around all of the issues, we had to problem solve and troubleshoot, figure out what the thing was going to look like, a little bit of building the airplane as we were flying it.”

Provost Cudd recognized the unique opportunity the moment presented and made the bold and socially responsible decision to move with care and urgency. She admitted: “So, the process was very ad hoc.” And understandably so. “It was not a normal university curriculum development process,” Cudd continued. “And the good thing is,” she acknowledged, “it was completely done by the faculty.” The Provost explained: “It’s a Pitt course, not in Africana Studies. And Yolanda wanted it that way. And so, we made up this P-I-T-T course. We only have one other PITT course: the Mental Health and Wellbeing course.” The provost was pulling back the curtain on how the ABRC came to be on the administrative realm; and in such a rapid fashion. “Doing it from the university level meant that I could use the university curriculum committee called PACUP or Provost Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Programs. I could use that as the governance body to approve this course”, she explained. That move was as clever as it was convenient because it, according to the provost, “avoided a lot of potential debate, critique; maybe having to modify it, maybe in ways that, if it had to go through all the levels, it wouldn’t have happened so quickly.”

“I was shocked for one,” said Massenberg, “[at] how fast things were moving right off the bat.” Massenberg understood “a lot of that [was] in part because Bonneau was so willing to help me with it.” It makes sense that Sydney “was surprised that it was moving that fast [and] surprised that this wasn't something that took five years. Because it very well could have.” Folks familiar with the deep, bureaucratic infrastructures of universities and large corporations know Massenberg was not being sarcastic or cynical or hyperbolic. In addition to being surprised, Sydney was also pleased and expressed a sense of being primarily relieved, presumably from the anxiety that swift, and let alone, large-scale change can bring on the person or people primarily responsible for said change. She credited her faculty interlocutors with contributing to that state of being, when she confided: “I was just glad that I said something and glad that Dr. Roberts and I were working together on it, because I just really trusted the people who were putting it together when I wasn't there. So I was just excited, happy about it.” In the passage below, Massenberg explains her initial idea and how it evolved as she considered various concerns.

Even before I submitted anything to anyone, it was just about the kind of class that I was asking for. So when I wrote my letter originally, I was asking that a class be created to do what I was asking it to do. But then I realized how many classes I had already taken that did this in parts. Then, what I asked for was that the university just change the requirements that they already have, that I personally felt were pointless and didn't really get the job done, so that students would have to take classes that were doing what I was asking for. And I figured that would be the least difficult way for the University to do things, because we all know how slow these types of organizations move. So, I was figuring if the classes already exist, then I'm asking them for something small, but something that I felt would make a big difference.

From the vantage point faculty convening in committees, “We started meeting very early July and we met every week,” recalled Patel, a member of the committee led by Dr. Covington-Ward, asked to create the one-credit, university (PITT-0120) course on anti-Black racism. “There were many other committees and moving parts of this that likely came into formation right about the same time.” One of those other committees was one chaired by Dr. Roberts; designed and assigned to develop a three-credit course on anti-Black racism. According to Roberts, one of the only faculty working on both committees, the ad-hoc committee she led completed its work in four to six weeks and disbanded. According to Bonneau, the curriculum for the three-credit course passed in the faculty and university senates, but went no further.

“It was probably middle of July when she put together the team”, recalled Dr. Bridges, speaking of the Provost and the administrative/technical team. “That's not a lot of time to build a course or to design a course”, he acknowledged. “And then we're going to enroll every single incoming student that comes to the University of Pittsburgh?! So it was really, really important.” Dr. Bridges admitted: “I was kind of alarmed and worried. It was like, ‘Holy crap! We've got minutes to get this thing up and running.’ So it was a real scramble.” Recalling an early moment in the process, Bridges continued: “I remember that first weekend reaching out to the first lecturer. We had to have a lecture up and ready for Wednesday. And so we had to reach out to the faculty member and say, ‘Hey, can we work with you to get this thing at least planned out? We'll record over Zoom. It may not be pretty, but at least it will be something’,” he said, adding a chuckle. That was the just the beginning; Bridges continued: “We had to articulate what the learning objectives were. We had to figure out what the pre-course survey was going to be at this point. We knew we wanted to do some pre and post evaluation and assessment. Wasn't a whole lot of time to... and it

was a weekend. There weren't a whole lot of people" available to help at the last minute, as Bridges recalled the very real and very rushed roll-out of responsibilities.

The urgency of the moment was not the only theme Dr. Bridges recollected about the summer of 2020 and how the ABRC came to be. "I think there was just an overall sense of commitment", he told me. "We'll figure it out and make this thing work. It may not be the prettiest thing in the initial launch, but we'll figure this out." Again, Bridges emphasized, "There was a real sense of commitment to its importance and its value. And it was unique. There weren't institutions that were kind of taking that stand or taking that path." Yes, it did appear that Pitt was carving out a distinct place for itself among universities by creating and requiring a course specifically designed to grapple with anti-Black racism; and in an era of anti-Blackness using Black studies and core curricula as sites for cultivating racial literacy and antiracist ethics.

"Yeah. So," in addition to a "sense of urgency [and a] sense of commitment. I think there was a real sense of collaboration and cooperation", said Bridges. "So it's a Provost initiative facilitated and supported by this team of faculty, distributed across the institution" he explained. The teaching center was helping on the development and the delivery of the course. It really did reflect a community, that commitment and engagement across different pieces of the university."

On Wednesday, August 19th of 2020, an email entitled, "A Message from Provost Ann E. Cudd" arrived in the inboxes of its addressees: the "students, faculty, and staff of the Pittsburgh Campus" (there are five campuses in total) as the three-page letter from Provost Cudd read. This email is significant to this story and study because it is the first public correspondence announcing the course in Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance, PITT 0210. In the sixth paragraph of the document, "drops the mic" after "laying down the law", the new "law of the land", to speak colloquially. Here is where she makes it known that the course exists, and that its



Figure 4:6 Figure 4:6 A Message from Provost Ann E. Cudd on August 19, 2020

offered free of charge, open to all university constituents, and required of all first-year students. Figure 4:6 presents an image of the Provost's letter. For a legible version of this letter, please refer to Appendix D.

4.6 Part III: “Labor Pains” - Concerns and Challenges

Bringing to life, PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance was a major endeavor. With such endeavors come serious concerns and challenges; and the ABRC was no exception. Throughout the process of conceiving, carrying, and nurturing this course into being—and increasingly in hindsight—faculty members functioning metaphorically as obstetricians, midwives, doulas, or perhaps, surrogates made note of conspicuous challenges and subtle concerns. In a turn of phrase, the following testimonies can be likened unto labor pains. To be sure, some of these statements did express concerns directly related to labor, while others were focused on operating constraints, course capacity, online vs. in-person dynamics, political pressures and motivations, racial equity, and pushback. chaos factors/known-unknowns. Like all the sections in this chapter, only portions of the data collected are being presented due to editorial considerations.

“I think that one of the challenges of a university creating a course that is specifically in response to an uprising is how to do something that has traction for a longer game” Dr. Patel began, “traction [that] can get synced in enough that momentum can happen. So I think it's hard for any university to do that,” she continued, “because at some point, if it's really raising up issues of oppression and domination, it might pause to think about what that means to have one TA (teaching assistant)—who happens in this case to be a Black man—be the TA for thousands of students.” Despite the potential of sounding redundant, it is honest to divulge that this was literally a “mic drop” moment... in my mind—and perhaps written on my face—during our interview; and not

only because I was that “Black male TA” she described. “It’s problematic is a polite way to put that. It’s ironic is another way to frame that, it’s concerning,” continued Patel. “It’s concerning because while the course itself had financial backing from the university, which is significant, materially,” explained Patel, “it also reenacted patterns of racism and capitalism that are concerning.” Patel read this labor arrangement as a reflection and signal that “there is a limit to [the] commitment” the university made to the course and much to be desired with regard to embodying/modeling the [social/racial] justice and equity aims that are constitutive of anti-oppression and justice teachings and praxis. “In my estimation,” observed Professor Patel, “that really showed up in how do we even say as a sentence like, ‘Oh, yeah, there’s one TA for a course that’s going to have about 8,000 students in one academic year.’”

“It’s a frustration”, said Patel, as she linked and discussed the tensions of critical scholarship and the pedagogical demands of the parameters of the ABRC. Patel talked about the challenges of academically approaching such a catastrophic force and gargantuan phenomenon (as anti-Blackness) in only 14, 15-minute lessons/lectures. “It’s like, ‘How do I choose anti-Black racism and education?’ To quote Ta-Nehisi Coates, ‘Racism isn’t a speed bump; it is the road.’ So here’s 15 minutes, which, again, it’s about design. We can’t teach everything all at once in one moment or even 15 minutes. So we constantly have to make choices,” explained Patel.

“So, I did not feel like there was really recognition of the full extent of the... not just material labor, but also emotional labor that everyone on that committee did”, said Dr. Roberts. “We all got a little plaque at the end, which I suppose is nice symbolically. But it’s not going to help me pay for my house or for groceries.” Telling “it like it T-I-is” to borrow the phrase of the late African American comedienne, LaWanda Page, Dr. Roberts was open and honest about the “labor pains” (metaphorically the concerns/challenges; and literally the suffering and pains related

to the labor conditions) she experienced and witnessed. “I was very kind of adamant that we, the core—the Yolanda Covington-Ward chaired committee—get some kind of payment for being on the committee”, said Roberts. “That did not initially happen,” she explained. “But,

when we started talking about who's going to give lectures, I said, “Okay, we are performing that labor. I think we should get paid for that. We should get some sort of stipend or honorarium.” And so we all kind of settled on, okay, we're going to ask for \$1,000. And yes, the provost said yes for \$1,000. So everyone who did a lecture received that payment. Does that make up for us essentially giving up our summer to do this, instead of doing research? A summer when the Black faculty were already emotionally taxed from everything that was happening. No, it does not!

There is nothing ambiguous or vague about Dr. Roberts comments on this matter. Only the people carrying the load know, feel, and therefore can honestly describe how heavy it is. The testimonies and analyses offered by both Patel and Roberts hearken to and illustrate—in terms that are material and lived—a particular passage from Patel’s most recent book: “For the most part, universities have only shifted their structural and cultural practices when students have demanded change to decenter whiteness and open opportunities for poor and subjugated communities,” wrote Patel (2021). “Too often, those changes are asked to be dealt with by people of color, often women, named as diversity workers” (p. 134). Being a woman of color and former Associate Dean of Equity & Justice in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh, it is safe to say that Professor Patel knows and has felt the “labor pains” she described.

In the spirit of “racially literate mobilization across racial lines”, to invoke the words of Guinier (2004), it is noteworthy that the few white faculty and key administrators involved with the ABRC were at least intellectually aware of these concerns, both anecdotally and in this

instance. All three of the white administrators I interviewed raised this concern at some point in their reflections on the ABRC, and the context surrounding and coursing through it. “In that process, a big consideration for me was that we didn't want to create extra labor for the faculty who developed the course, but sometimes we also wanted to give them opportunities for input if they wanted to help shape the ways we were tweaking the course,” said Grayson. “So, I pretty much just corresponded with Yolanda Covington-Ward, as the point person of the creation of the course, to run ideas past her and see if things were okay, or if she wanted to give input”, Grayson explained. “And that seemed to work really well,” they continued, “and that led to some additional conversations around supplementary stuff around the course.”

Shifting focus to another type of labor pain, one that is more subtle yet already unveiled in previous comments by Roberts, the concern of “emotional labor” resurfaced. Grayson discussed the external dynamics and chaos factors that presented immediate challenges and persistent pressures which demanded emotional labor. Grayson explained how they had to contend the “initial press and media and questions from students, parents and external people about the course. And so my role was also to respond to them, when [the TA] didn't, and especially respond to them when it seemed like they were being hostile. And I didn't want...” Grayson paused, and then clarified: “Our idea about that, was that the TA, particularly as a Black person, should not have to face additional racism and hostility. That was not going to meet the goals of the course or this initiative.”

One of the most obvious challenges of the course was the sheer size of it. The participant enrollment during the inaugural semester of the ABRC, in the fall of 2020, peaked around 5,000. This number included both the auto-enrolled first-year students and those who registered voluntarily. The fact that the course was completely online made it an unprecedented endeavor for

this massive, “brick and mortar” university. In some cases, “more is merrier”; yet, in most cases, more people means “mo’ money, mo’ problems” to quote the Notorious B.I.G. The same applies in the context of schooling and public education. If the first half of the conversation is about providing high-quality instructional services to more students, the second half of the conversation is expected, if not guaranteed, to be about sourcing the resources and finances necessary to provide those high-quality instructional services. Concerns related to the challenges posed by the enrollment size versus designated resources quagmire were top of mind for Bridges and his tiny team at the Center for Teaching and Learning.

“One of the concerns was that there were so many students and there were limited resources,” said Bridges. “We had this discussion early on about, is there any way to facilitate more meaningful interaction among students? To have something that was perhaps synchronous in nature. We all would’ve liked to have seen more of that, but there just wasn’t the resources to do that,” Bridges explained with visible disappointment. As the one supervising the online presence and overall performance features of the platform, the challenges of “carrying” and “nurturing” a class of these proportions were indeed technological as well. As Bridges explained, “We were trying to get students to engage, so some of the issues” had technological fixes like “embedding the quizzes into the videos” when the CTL team detected that student engagement levels of the lectures were low. “That engagement issue,” said Bridges, “was a consequence of the size of the course. You couldn’t have been facilitating breakout sessions for small groups of students for 5,000 students. It just wasn’t functional.

Patel chimed in on the challenges with technology as well. “Having been one of the only universities to create a course like this—that was in response to the uprising—and on such a massive scale—to have it be required”, said Patel. Then, referring to and quoting a lead member

of the CTL team, Patel said with a degree of amusement: “I love how Andrew put it: ‘Any system that there was, this course broke it.’ So Canvas, Panopto, it broke [them] because it just couldn’t handle the size of the thing. And that’s not anybody’s fault,” continued Patel, “because Panopto wasn’t designed to have, basically, 6,000 people view it within a certain amount of time. It wasn’t designed for that. So of course, it broke.”

“The biggest challenge of this course,” according to Bridges, “[was that] it wasn’t clear who really owned it. Where did the thing live?” he asked rhetorically. Bridges knew and explained: “It didn’t live in Africana studies. There wasn’t a primary faculty support member. The faculty team that designed the course and gave the lectures, they really weren’t involved in the administration of the course. It’s a provost course.” In concluding, Bridges offered the following solution-oriented advice for PITT 0210, and perceivably other educational institutions that may endeavor a similar enterprise: “And so I think clearly define and articulate ownership of the course and who has responsibility for various decision-making features.” Bridges’ perspective on this illustrates how the same feature that allowed for the rapid institutional support and subsequent creation and implementation of the ABRC described by Cudd, is the same feature that in Bridges’ view, presented a significant challenge.

Speaking of Cudd, the Office of the Provost and the Provost herself were contending with a different species of challenges during that time. The brand of “labor pains” confronting them were externally generated from constituents such as parents, students, alumni, board members, and politicians. The Provost and her staff navigated the pushback, politics, and prejudice while negotiating power in defense of PITT 0210, the course in anti-Black racism.

4.6.1 Pushback, Politics, Power, and Prejudice

Although conducting a systematic analysis of externally derived pushback aimed at the PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to acknowledge it, track it, and discuss it within the context of the overall experience of the course. To be sure, support was not unanimous for the ABRC; especially not the part that it was mandatory for all first-year students entering the University of Pittsburgh in the fall of 2020. There was a small number of parents, students, and alumni who made their dissent known. The amount could be negligible in terms of percentages when factoring in approximately 5,000 students, up to 10,000 parents, and over 340,000 alumni. Yet, their voices were heard. From my vantage point as the Teaching Assistant (TA) during that first year, I would approximate the rate of formally articulated and presented dissent was one percent or less. However, when considering it from a qualitative perspective, the locus moves from a focus on quantity to a focus on content.

As the sole TA for the course, I was the first point of contact for everyone who corresponded directly with the course because I was the steward of the email and Canvas accounts associated with the course. Occasionally, an email from a parent, on behalf of their disgruntled child, or from the disgruntled student themselves, trickled into the ABRC's official university inbox. I remember at least one email from a "concerned alumni." Yet, to be transparent, I had the privilege of not being laden with the additional responsibility of having to engage those individuals and their dissent and/or discontents. As a matter of internally and informally derived protocol, Grayson requested that I forward to them (Grayson) the emails that were antagonistic and/or expressed dissension towards the course. The intention motivating Grayson's request was an effort to shield the African American TA from the psychological labor it would require, as well as potentially harmful experiences it could deliver. Since my contact with the voices of dissent

transmitted through email was limited, and through any other means, nil, I have an awareness of their existence but not a deep knowledge of their content or the correspondence that ensued between those parties and Grayson.

In our interview, Grayson briefly discussed these same topics. “We had the initial press and media, and questions from students, parents, and external people about the course. My role [was] to respond to them, when you didn't, and especially respond to them when it seemed like they were being hostile.” In their words, Grayson explained the division of labor I detailed in the previous paragraph. “Our idea was that the TA, particularly as a Black person, should not have to face additional racism and hostility.” Emphasizing the point, Grayson added: “That was not going to meet the goals of the course or this initiative.”

Grayson continued down this lane and offered a bit more information about the nature of the content voiced by these dissenting parties. “I remember dealing with a couple of really outspoken people, external to the university, who had misconceptions about critical race theory,” said Grayson. They “had bought into the press that their misconception of critical race theory was what this course was about.” Furthermore, Grayson nuanced their narrative when they recalled having “other external conversations with folks that were more productive, such as why the course focused specifically on anti-Black racism, as opposed to other forms of racism.” Grayson remembered “one conversation about anti-Asian hate crimes, which were happening during that time, and another one about antisemitism, particularly given our proximity to the Tree of Life Synagogue.” Grayson noted, “Those I felt were more productive discussions.”

Building on this theme, the testimony offered by Provost Cudd during our interview revealed a vivid set of challenges and more dramatic forms of systematic pushback. Cudd opened up about the fact “that throughout the course of the year, I had to defend this course to various

constituencies, including a number of members of the board of trustees.” But not only her, “the Chancellor (Patrick Gallagher) was also defending the course with legislators,” recalled Cudd. “Furthermore,” she continued, “at the end in the summer of 2021, we were at a point where we were having to defend our Commonwealth appropriation for the university. So, about \$180 million” was on the line, and the ABRC (PITT 0210) was at the heart of the matter. “In the minds of a number of legislators,” explained Cudd, “a big problem was the mandatory nature of this course. And we had the narrowest positive vote that we’ve ever had for our Commonwealth appropriation. So, we lost a lot of votes as a result,” she admitted. But in that instance, Pitt’s “top brass” prevailed against their political foes in defending the need, value, creation, and implementation of the course in anti-Black racism..

By any account, \$180 million worth of annual funding is a lot of money at stake. Yet, Cudd had more war stories to share. “We had to defend it against conservatives, against politicians, [and] some of our board; [although] ultimately, they did stand by it,” she recalled. “I mean, there were some who were against it, but ultimately they [stood with it].” Cudd added, “Several times over the course of the last year and a half, I’ve presented it to the board with the numbers, the assessments, and so forth to defend what we’ve done.” To be sure, “There are other board members who think it’s fantastic,” she added. “We’ve gotten a lot of positive national press. We’ve also been in the conservative press, with critiques basically saying we’re indoctrinating people or something like that.”

In concluding her remarks and rich testimony about this particular topic, Cudd underscored the reality that indeed, “there are political concerns and seeing that has been eye-opening and to me,” she admitted. “[There are] people who want to shut down this course,” said Cudd. “Plenty of people,” she emphasized. “And to me, that’s just the embodiment of white supremacy.” Cudd

explained, her paradoxical reality of negotiating the webs of white supremacy by describing it as something she “doesn't have to confront [on a daily basis]... because I'm white. But when I'm trying to support this thing (PITT 0210) that white supremacy opposes, then I have to confront that.”

The one major policy change that happened between the first year of the ABRC (AY 2020-21) and the second year (2021-22) was removing the language stating the course was mandatory for all first-year students and adopting a more subtle strategy of auto-enrolling all first-year students and allowing the extreme minority of students (and/or parents) who refuse to participate in this free, one-credit learning opportunity to opt-out of the course. It would appear from Cudd's testimony that this policy change was motivated or inspired by the pushback received by university administrators from the small but determined collection of student, parent, and alumni voices compounded by the force of the Pennsylvania state legislators who took severely oppositional stances towards the mandated course in anti-Black racism. “So, those were some reasons to try to soften the mandatory [feel] of it, right?” Cudd explained.

“The other reason is that ultimately we did allow some students to not take the course in the first year,” continued Cudd. “There were some who had kind of academic reasons, like *I'm already taking 22 hours of credit. I'm just overloaded. I can't.* Then there were some [pushback] in the form of parents who came to see the Chancellor.” According to the Provost, some parents went as far as making threats and giving ultimatums. “And we thought it is not worth losing the whole course for this one kid,” said Cudd. “We've got 5,000 people; 5,000 souls to worry about,” she reasoned. “And if we lose one... It was a pragmatic decision and we didn't advertise it.”

“The fact is that 98% of the students took it this year, even though it was basically voluntary—it was opt out rather than opt in,” explained Cudd before adding the insight that

“behavioral economists would say: *Oh, that's the way to get people to do [something; to say] oh, sure! I'll do it.* But if you have to opt in, you'd have a much lower [rate]. You'd have 20%, instead of 98%.” Cudd concluded. “So, that was what we did. We greased the wheels a little bit politically. It was a compromise. But I stand by it as the right thing to have done all things considered. Now, I'm facing a lot of criticism from the University Senate for having done this. They think every student should be forced. Not only that, they passed a resolution that we should force everybody to take a three-credit course, but that still seems to me to be very difficult to figure out how to yeah, how to manage that for other reasons.”

“I wasn't sure how that was going to turn out, but I think it was a good move,” admitted Grayson. “I think we'll see with time, but very few students opt-out; very few.” Plus, “you're better able to convince people when something isn't mandated, right? I mean, I think it's just kind of like humans bristle at that, young adults certainly bristle at it,” Grayson reasoned. Furthermore, “I think when it's on a topic that someone, particularly white students, have never talked about, that can lead to even more resistance if it's mandatory,” Grayson added. “I think it's worked out really well so far,” Grayson continued, “and I think it's really tamped down on internal and external resistance to the course.”

4.7 Part IV: “Hindsight is 20/20”: Postpartum Perspectives and Reflections

Time and space away from things we deeply care about supports the process of gaining rich clarity and fresh perspectives. The interviews with the individuals presented in this chapter were conducted in the spring of 2022—more than one calendar year after the completion of the first iteration of PITT 0210. This allowed all of these major players, these folks on the frontlines and in the command-center, these multiple members of the ABRC birthing team to observe and/or participate in three iterations of the ABRC (fall '20, spring '21, fall '21) and have to breathe, rest,

and recuperate, and then observe, listen, and process that whirlwind moment between March and December of 2020—the spring of quarantine into the BLM summer into the ABRC fall. Due to said passage of time, there were an abundance of insightful, keen, and candid realizations and revelations ready for scholarly dispensation.

4.7.1 The Aha Moment

“I think it meant different things to different people”, said Dr. Bridges. For some, “I think this was an opportunity to provide for people to connect with, perhaps, a point of view, a perspective, to develop some understanding, and to hopefully internalize ideas, experiences, perspectives that they had never considered before”, Bridges explained. Bridges then added: “And do it in a way that was more than simply informational.” Bridges said, “I was hoping people would find some experience, whether it was a story, whether it was watching a video, whether it was listening to one of the lecturers, that they would have what we educators want to have. Like an aha moment.” He explained further: “Many of our students, when they think about racism, they think about individual racism. They don't understand how it's manifest in our culture, in the structure of society, in the structure of institutions. And that's a new idea for them.” To be sure, that was lesson number one in the ABRC and the core of “Module One” by Dr. Waverly Duck.

4.7.2 The Black Experience: In History and in Person

Dr. Roberts felt the ABRC was a particularly relevant and important educational opportunity for students “who don't choose an Africana studies major, or history major, or whatever that directly would have a course in that”, she said. They “still have to think about those sorts of things. And talk about those sorts of things with people who look like them, and who don't. Who have the same experiences and who have different experiences”, Dr. Roberts explained. In this passage, the history professor expounds on why “It's just so important...”

As a historian, of course, I am biased. And I think history is the most important part of understanding the black experience in the United States. But to me, the course includes that as well as lots of other disciplines and their takes on understanding Black history. The Black experience. The way Black people live in the United States. And also why? So a student who maybe doesn't know any Black person, has never spoken to a Black person, or maybe does have Black friends, but still doesn't understand what it's like to be Black. The course really is supposed to take them into what Black people experience. And also what has shaped that experience. Because, I think, that's what a lot of white people don't understand. Sure. You can see that Black people experience poverty at a higher rate; but [do] you know why? And [do you know] why it is not: “because somehow they are inferior?”

4.7.3 It Meant Something

“I think it was a very [important] stake in the ground in response to the events of that summer on the part of the university. I think it was important for Pitt and for students that the university developed and offered this course”, said Dr. Grayson, noting: “I think this was the first DEI/justice-related initiative that brought Pitt national attention.” Grayson explained: “I could tell in my conversations with people from other universities that the creation of the ABRC meant something to folks at other institutions. And from conversations with students across campus (even graduate students not enrolled in the course), I got the sense that students felt it meant something and said something about the University that it would create and require the ABRC.”

Another “part of the story was all the faculty who are willing to spend time putting this course together over the course of a summer, in a pretty rapid fashion”, said Grayson. “And I think that showed their commitment to the course and how important it was for the university as well,

and I'm so grateful to them for doing that", the administrator added. Furthermore, "it allowed students across campus to get to know Black faculty—and other faculty who study racism and race—whom they otherwise might not have learned about, explained Grayson. Offering one more note on the matter, Dr. Grayson said, "I think it was noteworthy that the process was built to focus on faculty members' scholarly expertise", said "It allowed the course to be grounded in scholarship—the mission of a research university."

4.7.4 It Was About the Uprisings

In *No Study Without Struggle*, Leigh Patel (2021) thinks with Harney and Moten (2013), co-authors of the scholarly subversive, intellectually irreverent, paradigm-shifting, post-structuralist text: *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Patel accentuated and paraphrased one of their points which argued: "the university needs scholars who employ theories that examine power in society, including scholars of ethnic studies, Black studies, and women's and gender studies, but it also emphatically needs those areas of scholarship to refrain from unhousing whiteness in the university" (p. 134). The latter observation, and the former one articulated in Grayson's ultimate sentence of the preceding paragraph, exemplify a revolving collision of interest convergence (Bell, 1980) and interest divergence (Guinier, 2004)—not a collision of these two concepts, rather one of scholarly agendas, power dynamics, anti-Blackness, and whiteness as property (Harris, 1993).

In our interview, Dr. Patel explained: "So, the course was a response to the uprising, and I think a lot of people might think that the course was a response to the killings," she said; before clarifying, "but the course was a response to the uprisings [as] the murders were unfortunately not unusual." However, "What was different," she began to explain, "was the pandemic. There was a brief time when a lot of people were basically on a pause from work. Things were shut down in

2020. So there was enough of a pause for people to be able to collectively connect a few dots”, explained Patel. “So there was a global uprising.” The professor’s logics and analysis were deeply familiar to me, as they resembled the conclusions I had made. “So this course was a response to that global uprising”, Patel echoed—intending to make the point indisputably clear, as it had become commonplace to conflate the killings and the uprisings as the catalyst for the rush of moves, gestures, and attention focused on racial justice, antiracism, anti-Black violence, and “Black Lives” mattering. “I believe that the course was a response to the uprisings, which doesn’t lower the course, or the effort. In my own opinion, and also in my own analysis of struggle, we may not get exactly the thing that we want”, explained Patel. In which case, we are left—and right—to, in Patel’s words, “respond with curriculum, programming, and money to the legacy of slavery and the ongoing structure of settler colonialism.”

On another note, Patel offered a post-partum peek inside the delivery room, almost two years after the ABRC birthing team was quickly formed and quickly finished its work. “I also enjoyed our faculty committee a great deal”, Patel admitted. “I said yes because of Yolanda’s amazing leadership, and the wonderful, brilliant people who showed up to work on this”, she added. “There were varying degrees in which we held in common what theories of change we had for this course or what we personally thought was possible and not possible [in] a society that has been built literally through enslaved labor”, Patel said. “We have different ideas about how can that ever be decoupled.” Patel, with her unique brand of bold and incisive analysis coupled with profound and defiant insights, added:

I think those are lessons that we can learn from looking back. I think there’s a big difference between “breaking” systems—information systems and communication systems. There’s a big difference between that, and just materially, *what are we doing with patterned realities*

of labor exploitation and theft. So, making a motion with one hand and making a motion with another hand and there's an expanse between word and deed. So, that's not novel, but it is noteworthy because this course attempted, was another attempt, to do something to bring these words and deeds slightly closer together to do a thing that was informed by not the words of the nation of freedom and liberty and justice and the land of the brave and the blah, blah, blah... not those words, but freedom dreaming words.

4.8 Conclusion

Who has the last word on the ABRC? That depends on who is listening, reading, and/or watching? It depends on who is paying attention. All that researchers, witnesses, actors, and [human] objects can do is speak their truths and record them. That is what this chapter is about: creating space for the folks responsible for the ABRC to tell its story, to help write the words. The next chapter creates space for the objects of the ARBC—the students—to give voice to their experiences with and thoughts about the course content, structure, protocols, and objectives; participating in the inaugural class, and their reflections on the #BLM summer of 2020.

5.0 Chapter V: The Results Are In!

ABRC Students “Tell it like T-I-is”: Findings from a Mixed-Methods Study

The second research question this study addresses is: What do measurable outcomes of quantitative and qualitative data reveal and suggest about the capacity of this core-curricula course in anti-Black racism to cultivate racial literacy [acquisition] in students who successfully completed the course? To recapitulate, racial literacy in the context of this study is defined as the process of learning, exploring, and expanding a competence/knowledge to (1) understand anti-Black racism (historical and current contexts), (2) identify (and respond to) racist policies and practices, and (3) develop (intra-and inter-) personal antiracist sensibilities.

In order to engage and analyze this question thoroughly, a range of data were gathered, studied, organized, illustrated, and described. Quantitative results from the pre-course and post-course surveys served as one primary source. Qualitative data in the forms of open-ended, written responses from the post-survey instrument and interview transcripts from student focus groups, administered specifically for this study, served as additional primary sources. Taken together, these sources provide a robust compilation of data to deeply engage with the research question under consideration.

This chapter leads with a presentation of the findings from the demographic details of the course participants ($N = 4,982$) as a whole, and the participant sample ($n = 3,448$) designed for this study. Next, the findings from the data related to five of the prompts presented in post-survey question five (PSQ-5) are described and exhibited. Following this, the findings from the students' open responses—collected in post-survey questions four (PSQ-4) are presented and analyzed.

5.1 Section I: Who Do They Think They Are?

Self-Reported Student Demographic Data

Although the entire entering class of first-year students in the fall semester of 2020 were auto-enrolled in PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance, students had to “unlock” the course in order to get started. The only way to initiate the online, one-credit course and begin the first of 14 modules was to engage the pre-course survey. The pre-course survey consisted of 10 questions: three related to race, racism, racial literacy, and social justice; plus seven questions asking for the following demographic information concerning: gender, transgender, racial/ethnic identity, Hispanic/Latiné origin, hometown description, political alignment, and parent’s highest education level. The race and social justice questions (the first three) were presented in a Likert scale format, prompting students to choose one of six possible answers from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” that reflected “to what extent” students’ perspectives corresponded to a list of critical and provocative statements (questions 1 and 3).

Questions four through ten, the demographic inquiries, gathered a limited set of the respondent’s background characteristics: gender, transgender status, race, Latiné/Hispanic status, hometown description, parent’s education level, and political alignment. The following figures (5.1 – 5.7) illustrate both graphically and numerically the self-reported demographic data of all students who completed the course pre-survey ($N = 4,982$) as well as those who completed both the pre- and post-course surveys ($n = 3,448$).

In this chapter, the total population as well as two population samples are considered. I refer to the total course population (all pre-survey respondents) ($N = 4,982$) as ALL, There is the quantitative study sample or QTS ($n/n1 = 3,448$) and the open-ended response sample or OER ($n/n2 = 1313$). These data help paint the picture of the students who comprised the entering class

of 2020 and the population samples that informed this study, as well as provide a reflection of the general student body demographics at the university. Figure 5.1 displays and compares the representation/identification numbers of the ALL (N = 4,974) and QTS (n = 3,441) data sets by race and ethnicity.

With a couple of exceptions (See Asian and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander) the proportions of racial/ethnic representation in both sets are the same or within one percentage point (see African American/African/"Black") in every category: American Indian or Alaskan Native – 0.8%; Asian N=19%, n=21%; Black or African American - N=9%, n=8%; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - N=2.4%, n=0.3; White – 65%; Mixed Race or Multiracial – 2%; Prefer not to say – 3%. At first glance, the difference in the Asian representation is noticeable, yet it is less prominent and less concerning than the extreme decline in Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander representation.

Curiously, any reference to Hispanic, Latinx/Latiné, or Spanish heritage was noticeably absent from the pre-survey question six: "What's your race?" This oversight and incompletely constructed prompt forced students of families from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Brazil, and beyond to choose presumably between being "Black" or "White" in terms of their racial identification—which for some may have also struck a chord evoking senses of political and/or cultural alignment, solidarity, and assimilation. The recognition of and request for the presence of Latiné lineage in the course population was the topic of question seven: "Are you Hispanic or Latino or of Spanish Origin?"

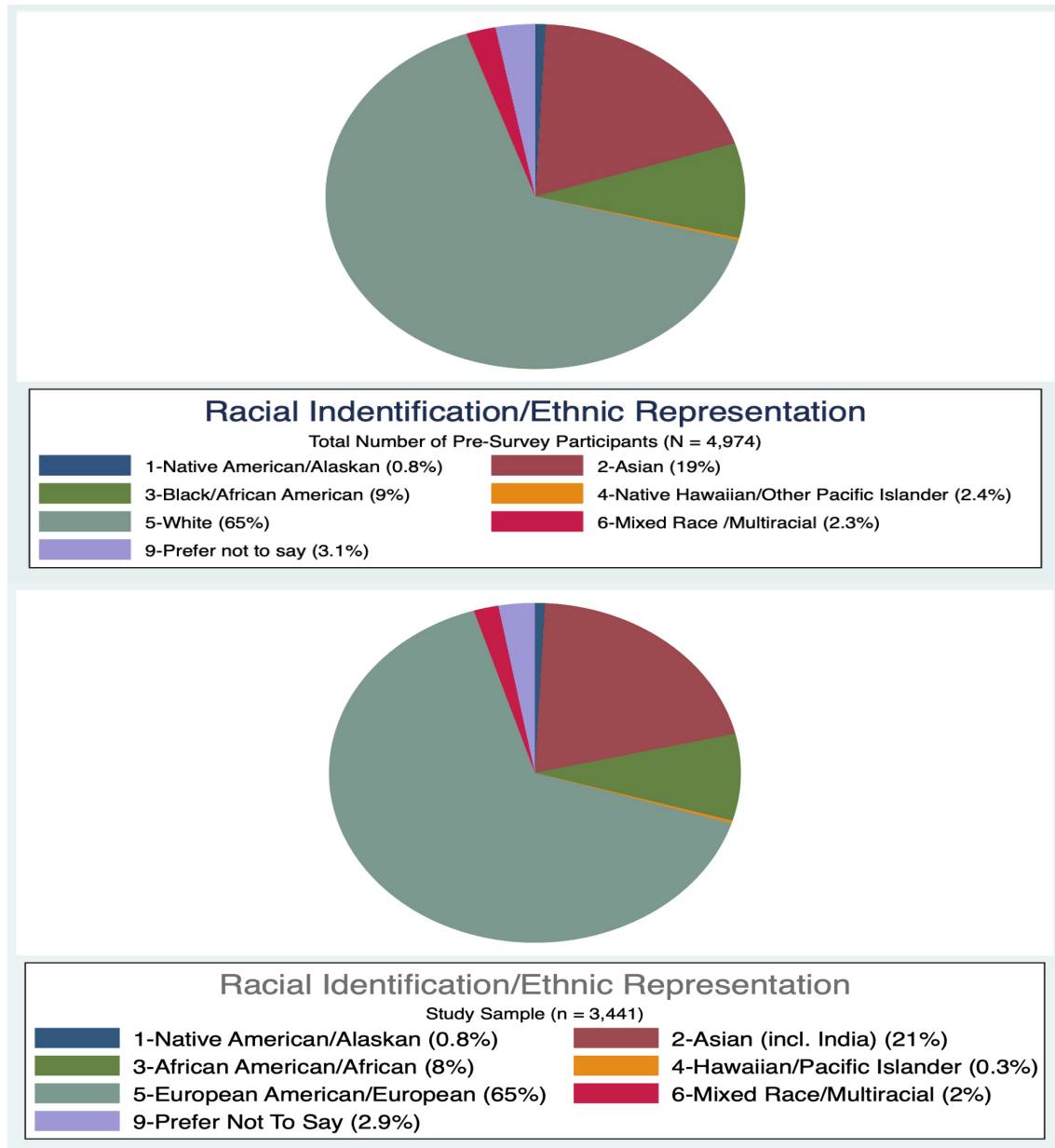


Figure 5:1 Comparison of Course Population to Study Sample by Race/Ethnicity

On the following page, Figure 5.2, presents and compares the data for the representation of the ALL (N = 4,974) and QTS (n = 3,441) data sets by Latiné origin. Respondents selected between “No”, “Yes”, and “Prefer not to answer” (PNTA). In both data sets, the numbers match: 7% - yes; 91-92% - no; 2% - PNTA.

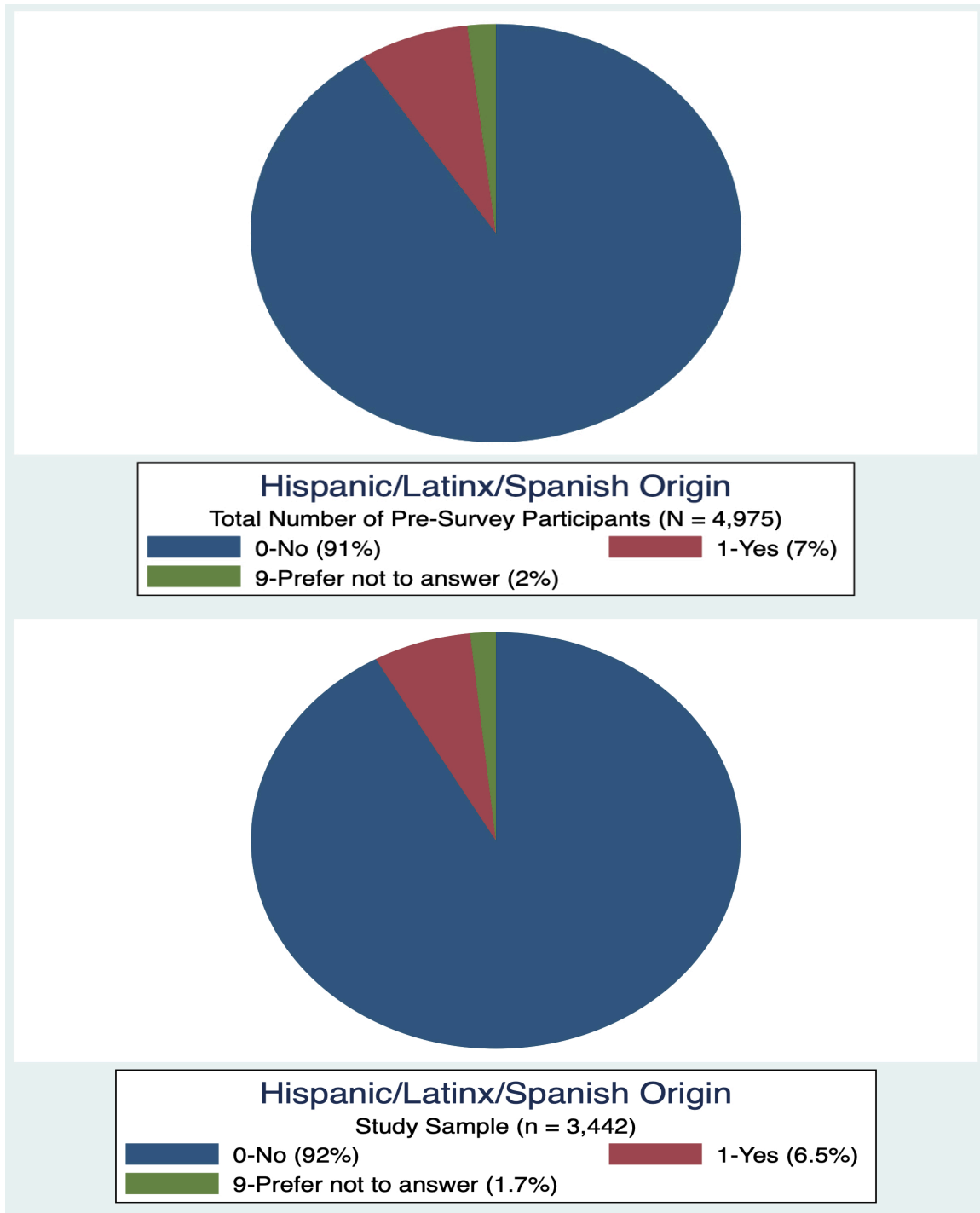


Figure 5:2 Comparison of Course Population to Study Sample By Latiné Origin

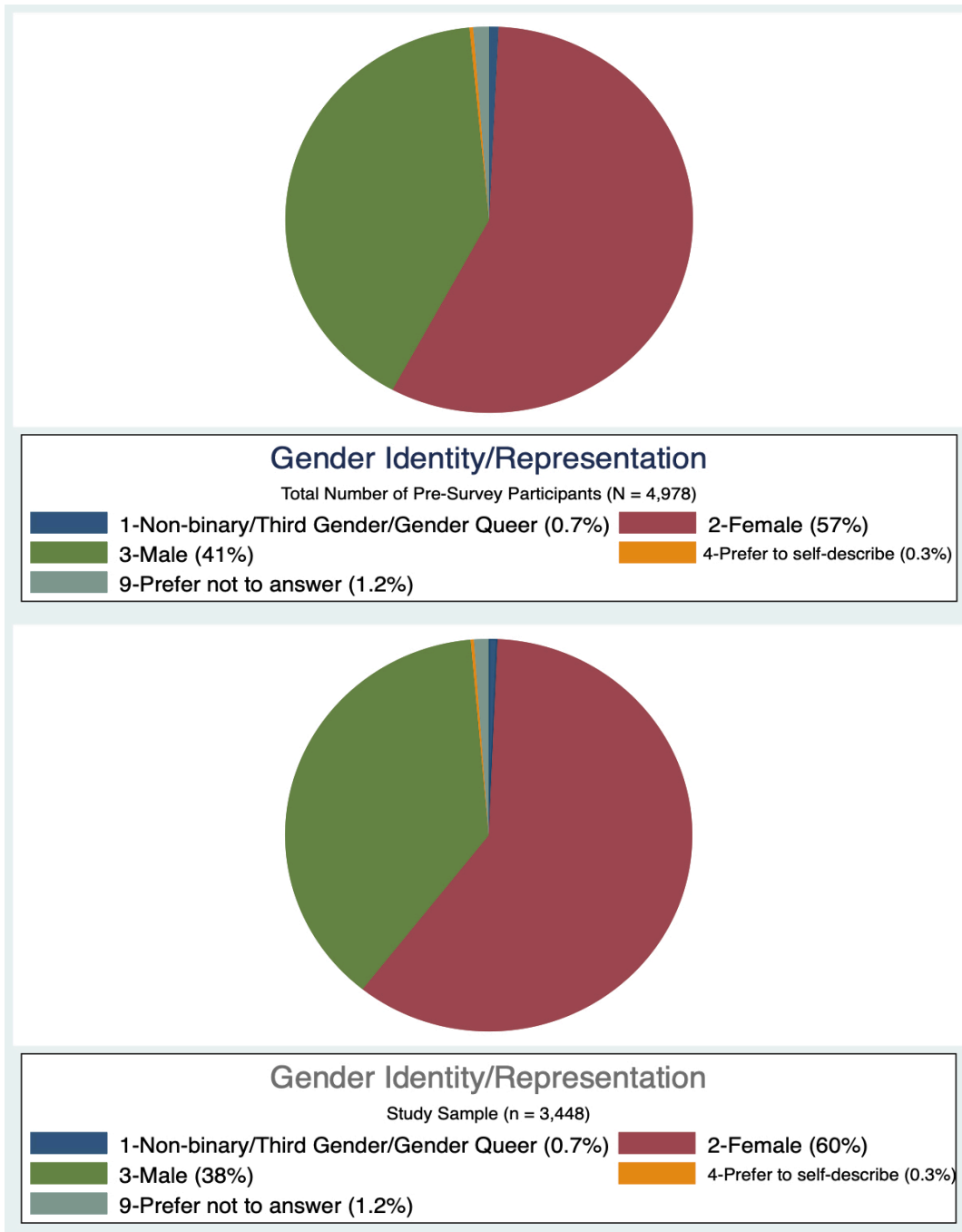


Figure 5:3 Comparing Population (N) to Study Sample (n) By Gender Identity

Gender identity is the subject of Figure 5.3. Question four on the pre-survey asked: “What is your gender?” Students are given the following choices: “Nonbinary/third gender/gender queer”; “Female”; “Male”; “Prefer to self-describe” (PTS-D); “Prefer not to answer” (PNTA). With the exception of a three and four percent variance in the categories for female and male, the

representational percentages for gender between the ALL and QTS numbers are identical: PNTA = 0.3%; PTS-D = 1.2%; Nonbinary/third gender/gender queer = 0.7%. In the “N” population, females represented 57% and males registered at 41 percent. In the “n” sample [population], female representation rose three percent to 60% while the percentage of male representation dropped by four to 37 percent.

Figure 5.4 (presented on the following page) provides a glimpse of the ways students described their hometowns between the options of “Rural”; “Suburban”; “Urban;” as presented in question eight, which asked: “How would you describe your hometown?”. As shown in Figure 5.4, the majority in both cases is extremely skewed toward students from suburban neighborhoods, representing at 71% in the ALL and 73% in the QTS sample. This is the only difference reflected in the two data sets. The representation of rural students was stable at 15% while the numbers for the rural minority shifted slightly from 13% in the N population to 12% in the n population.

Parent’s highest education level was another data point collected from course participants. Question nine on the pre-survey queried: “What is your parents’ or guardians’ highest level of education?” Students were allowed to choose from the following options: “some high school”; “high school graduate”; “some college”; “college graduate”; “master’s or professional degree”; or “PhD”. Figure 5.5 captures the proportions of responses for the ALL (N = 4,982) and the QTS populations (n = 3,448).

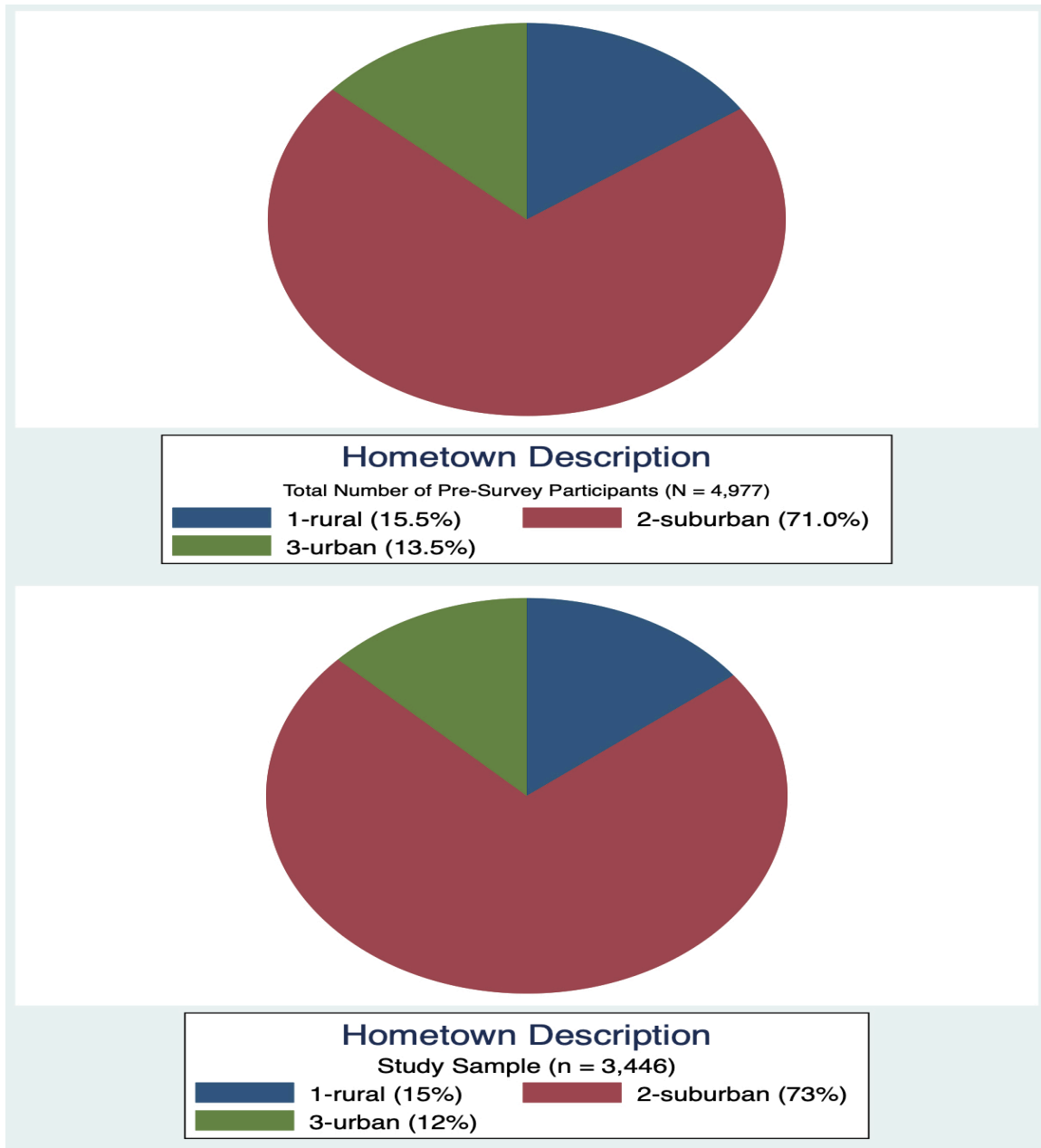


Figure 5:4 Comparing Course Population (N) to Study Sample (n) By Hometown

Upon observation, it appears the representation percentages in this category are close to identical. Exactly 2.4% of the students in both data sets reported their parent(s) did not finish high school; compared to approximately 7% of the parents who graduated high school but did not enter

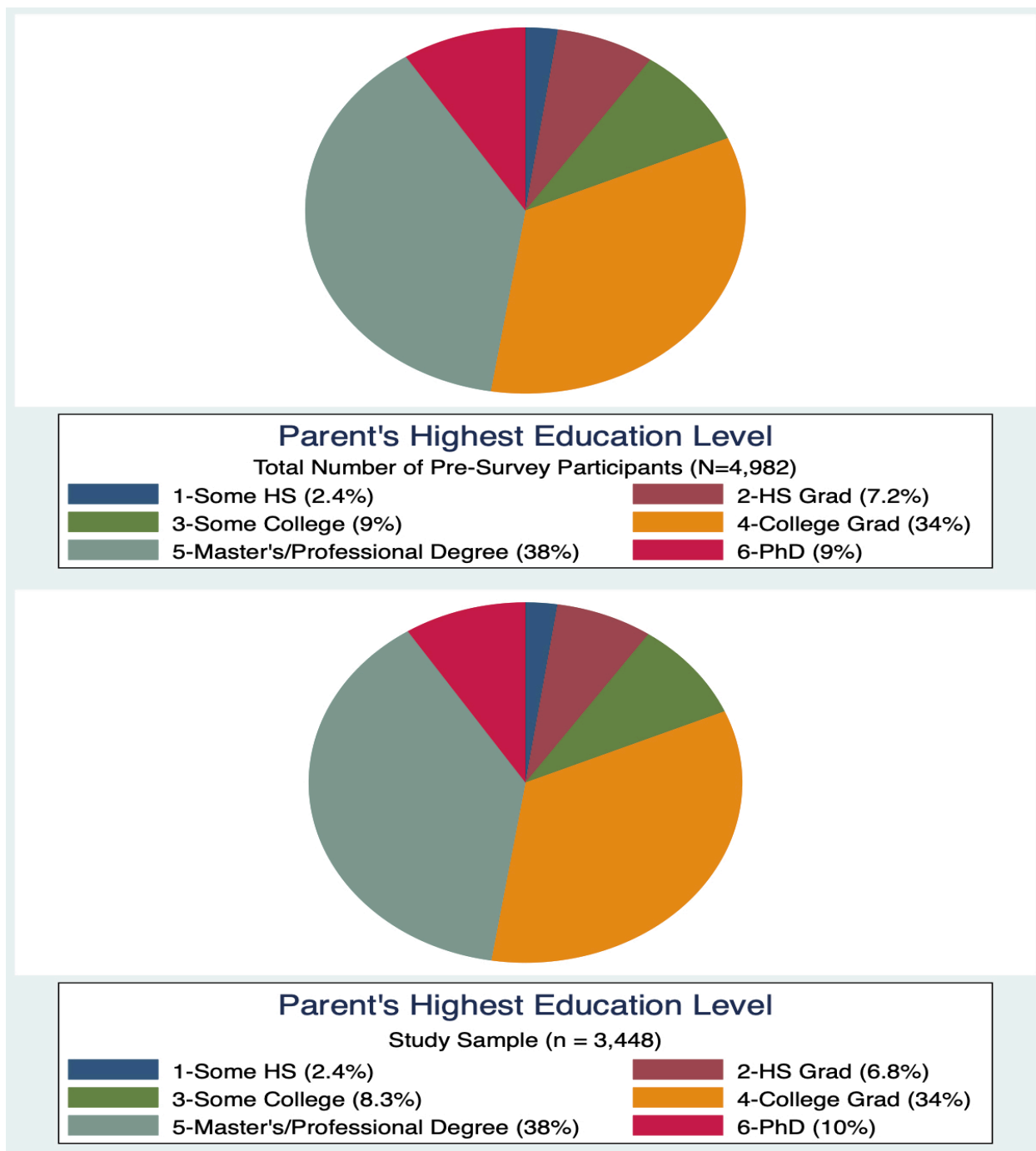


Figure 5:5 Comparing Population to Study Sample By Parent’s Education Level

Question ten on the pre-survey attempts to capture the general sentiment of the respondent’s political alignment or leaning by asking: “How would you describe yourself politically?”. Students are offered the following choices: “Farther right”; “Right”; “Moderate”;

“Left”; “Further Left”. The percentages pictured in Figure 5.6, displaying the response numbers in the ALL and QTS data sets, sharply mirror each other when compared. Two percent (2%) reported to be “further right” compared to 18% who claimed to be “further left”. Nine percent (9%) reported to align with the political label “right” compared to 33% of the population that identified as “left”. The largest slice of the pie, although not by much, was claimed by the “moderate” category, which represented 38% in the ALL and 37.2% in the QTS.

Political identity was the only demographic question posed on both the pre- and post-surveys. Presumably, a student’s political leaning would be the only demographic detail and data collected by the survey instrument that would/might likely change or be influenced in some measurable, correlative way by the experience of completing the course in anti-Black racism. This unique feature of the category on political identity allows for a comparative analysis of the data and the result of a clear, measurable delta. Using proportion percentages, Figure 5.7 presents the reported findings of question ten on political identity from the pre- and post-surveys.

As anticipated by the survey design team, there were measurable shifts in the political identity category from the time students started the course and the time they completed it. The only group proportion in category that remained stagnant was the one labeled “left”, which held at 33%. Change in the percentage points for the groups right of “moderate” were recognizable, yet only slightly. The “farther right” representation waivered on either side of two percent (2%).

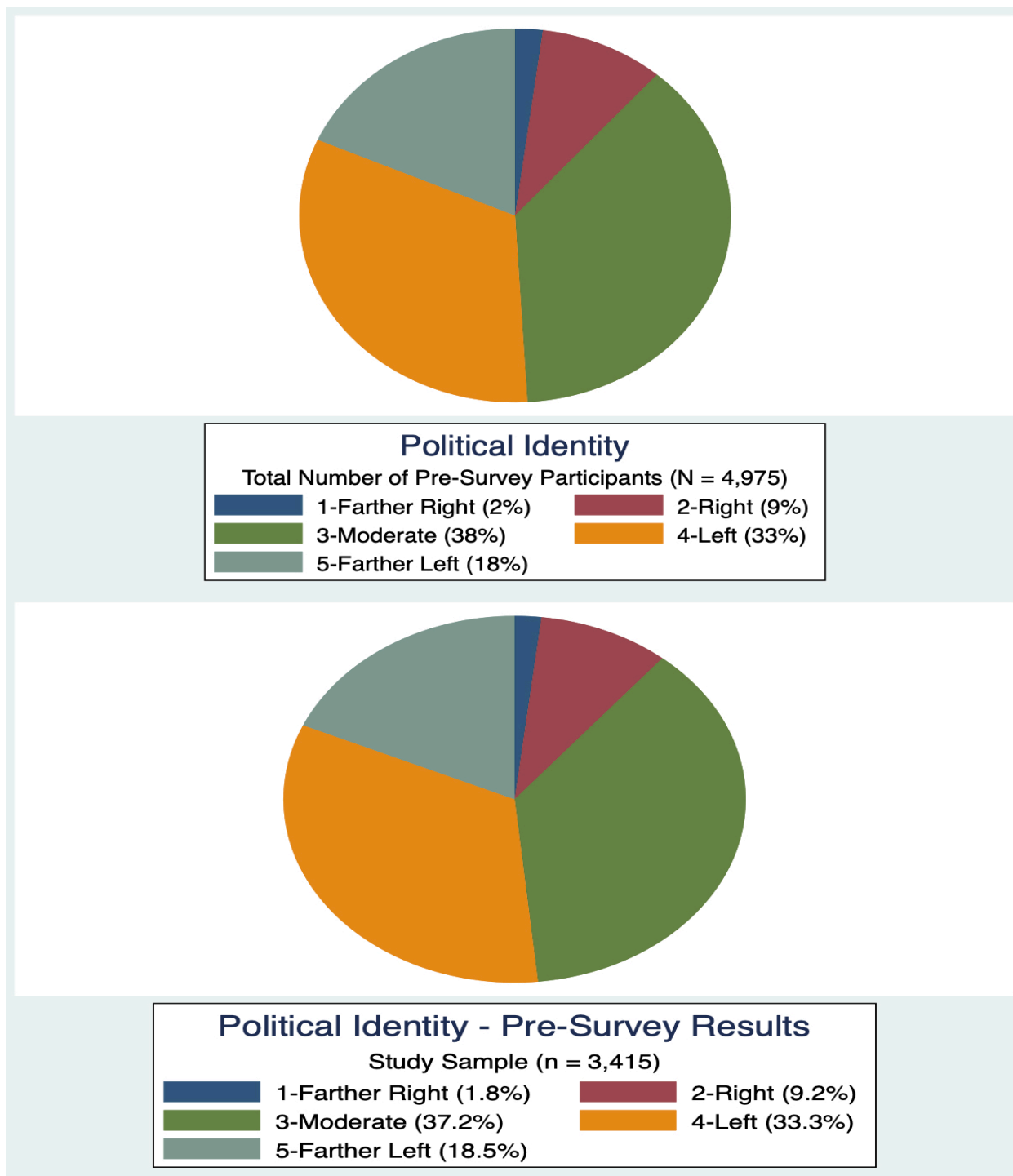
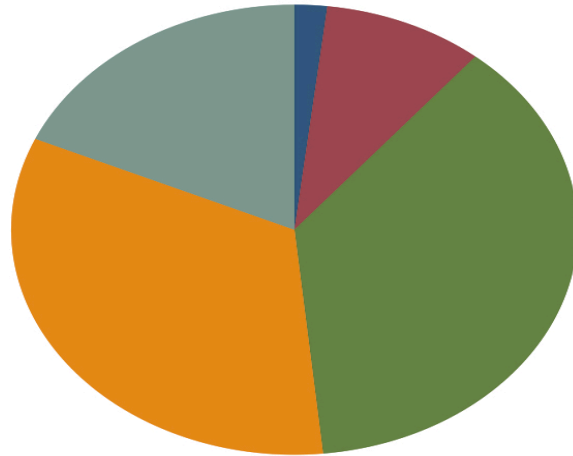


Figure 5:6 Pre-Survey Comparison - Population to Sample by Political Identity

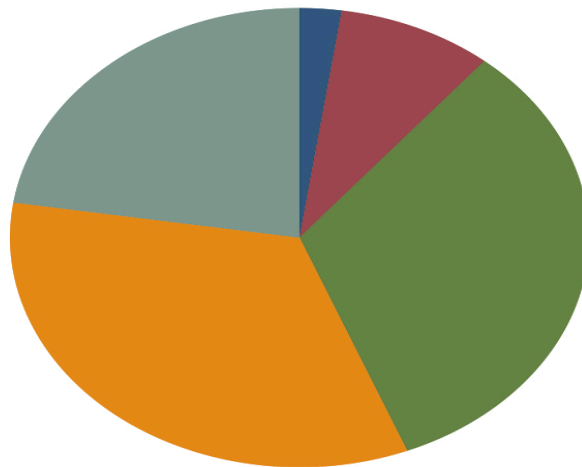
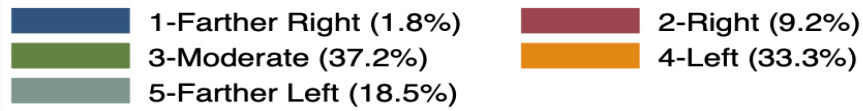
In the pre-survey, it registered at 2.3%; and slid by a fraction to 1.8% in the post-survey. The numbers for the group labeled “right” experienced a slide of the same degree as “farther right”, but in the opposite direction. The percentage decreased by 0.5% from 9.2% in the pre-survey to 8.7% in the post-survey. While a half percentile may not sound significant, when considered on the individual level, point five percent (0.5%) could equal up to 170 people in a sample of 3,400.

The larger shifts in political alignment were observable in the groups labeled “moderate” and “further left”. The percentages in both of these groups shifted by no less than four percent. In the pre-survey, 37.2% of the respondents listed themselves as moderates, in contrast to the post-survey percentages, which fell to 32.9%. Meanwhile, the “farther right” group saw a boost in representation between the pre-survey results of 18.5% and the post-survey results of 22.5%. From a broader view, the pre-survey revealed a total amount of eleven percent (11%) for folks right of center, 37% for folks in the center, and 52% for folks on the left. The post-survey, on the other hand, produced the following categorical results: a different composition of 11% on the right, 33% in the center, and 56% left of center. In summary, the data reveals a shift and delta of four percent to the political left within the study sample (n = 3,415).



Political Identity - Pre-Survey Results

Study Sample (n = 3,415)



Political Identity - Post Survey Results

Study Sample (n = 3,415)

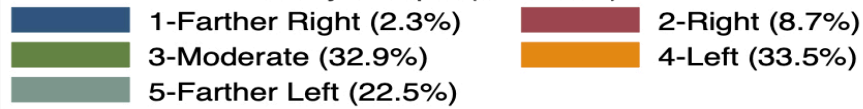


Figure 5:7 Comparing Pre- and Post-Survey Results of Sample By Political Identity

5.2 Section II: What Do They Think They Learned?

Quantitative Student Responses to Specific Course Content

This portion of the study presents findings from quantitative data collected from the course post-surveys (n = 3,449). On the following pages, the quantitative data will be presented and described using visual graphics (figures, tables, charts) and text. Preceding each of the graphic displays is a description of the data illustrated in each image.

Figures 5.8 – 5.12 present data gathered exclusively from the course post-surveys because the questions to which they are correlated (5e – 5i) are unique to the post-survey. Question five on the post-course survey asked students: “To what extent did participating in the course help you to...”. Then, on the next line, participants are presented with nine statements—one-by-one—to which they are prompted to choose one of four responses: “Not at all”; “A little”; “Some”; or “A great deal”. This study is considering only the last five of the nine prompts presented in post-survey question five, however, to offer more context, the first four prompts were as follows: “a. think about current events differently”; “b. think about yourself differently”; “c. reexamine your own perspectives”; “d. think about history differently”.

The prompt for question “5e” asked students if they “understand better the racial climate in the US?” Figure 5.8 illustrates the proportion of responses to question “5e”. Of students who completed the course, approximately six percent (6%) reported no growth in their understanding. Almost 15% reported “a little” bit of growth due to the course. A solid 34% reported “some” growth in their understanding of the racial climate in the U.S.; while 45% reported the course helped them grow “a great deal” in this particular area of critical social analysis.

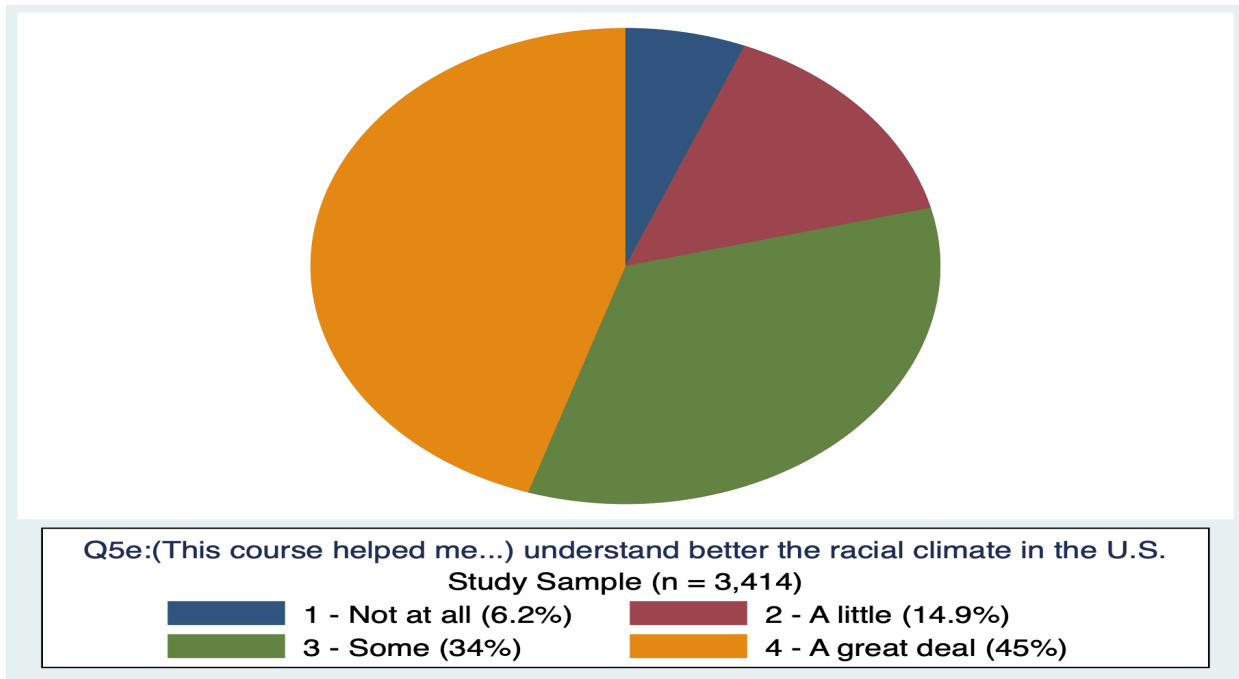


Figure 5:8 Responses to PSQ-5e: Better Understand US Racial Climate

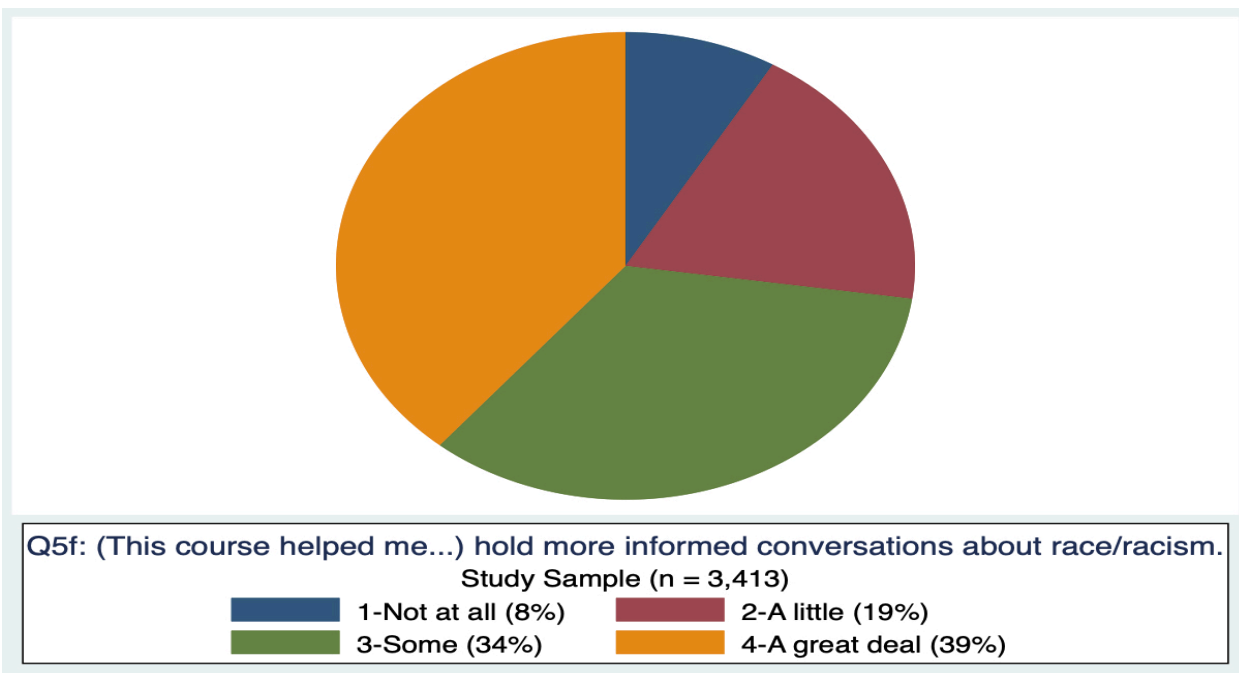


Figure 5:9 Responses to PSQ-5f: Hold More Informed Conversations

Question “5f” on the post-survey asked if completing the course helped students “hold more informed conversations about race and racism.” Figure 5.9 pictures the proportion of

responses for the four available categories. Out of the sample group totaling 3,413 students, 39% reported the course helped them “a great deal”, while 34% reported that it helped “some”. That’s a sum of 73% before adding the 19% who selected “a little”, which raises the representation of affirmative responses to 92%, and reveals an 8% margin of students who claimed the course did “not at all” help them hold more informed conversations about race and racism.

Turning now to question “5g” on the post-survey, which inquired about the degree to which the Course in Anti-Black Racism helped students “better recognize biased behaviors/actions in others”, Figure 5.10 captures the reported responses and their respective ratios.

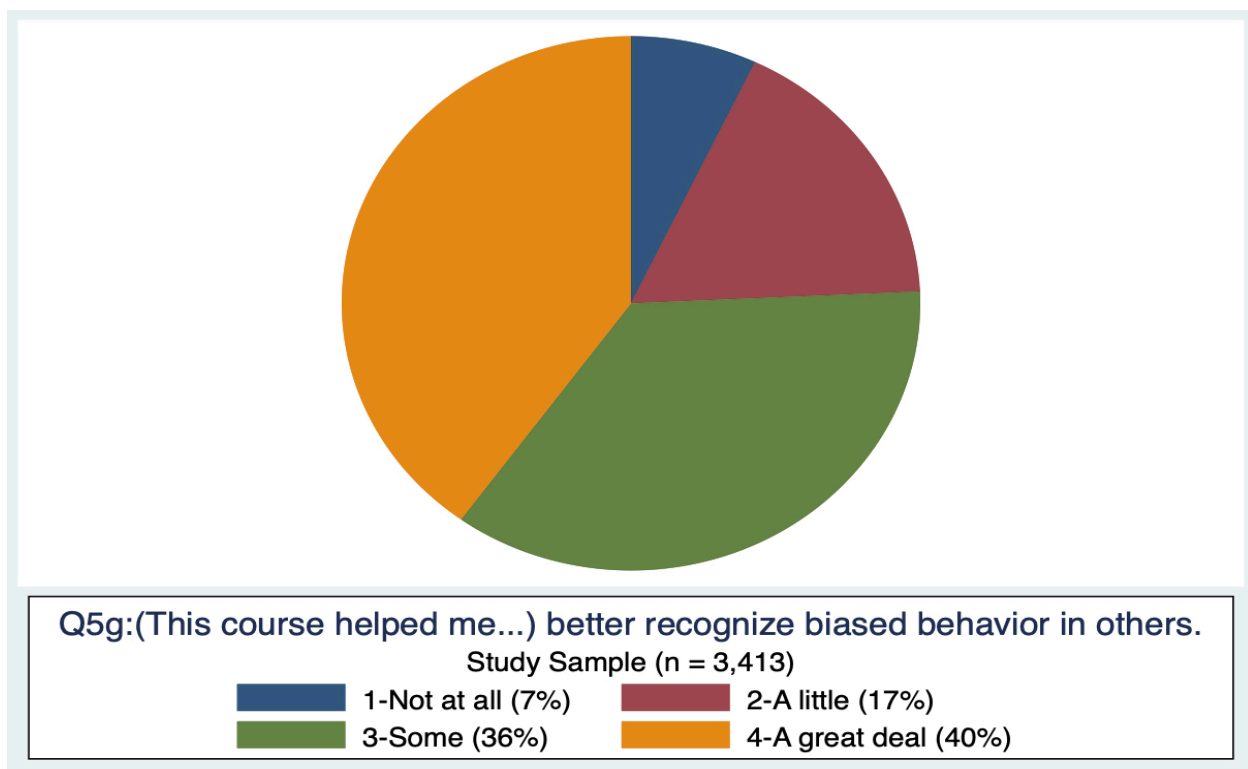


Figure 5:10 Responses to PSQ-5g: Recognize Bias in Others

Overall, a total of 93% of the respondents answered affirmatively, while 7% negated this proposition. The pool of affirmative responses apportioned as follows: 40% reported the course

assisted greatly, while 36% reported gaining “some” assistance, and 17% declared being “a little” more able to “recognize biased behaviors in others.”

Moving the focus from an outward gaze to an inward peer, students were asked to what extent did the Course in Anti-Black Racism help them “better recognize biased behaviors/actions in [themselves]” in question “5h” on the post-survey. Notice the similarity between questions “5g” and “5h”, except the latter asks students to assess introspectively rather than to assess others. Given the same four options previously outlined as possible responses, the quantitative data collected on student sentiment are demonstrated in Figure 5.11. At a broad glance, the numbers in each response category shifted modestly, from one to three percent. The percentage of students who claimed zero benefit from the course in this particular regard rose by one point from eight to nine percent. Those who indicated the course helped them detect their own biases “a little” grew by three points to 20 percent. This increase in the first two categories naturally equates to a decrease in the last two categories relegated to the 34% who reported “some” and the 37% who claimed the course helped increase their self-awareness of biased behaviors and actions “a great deal.”

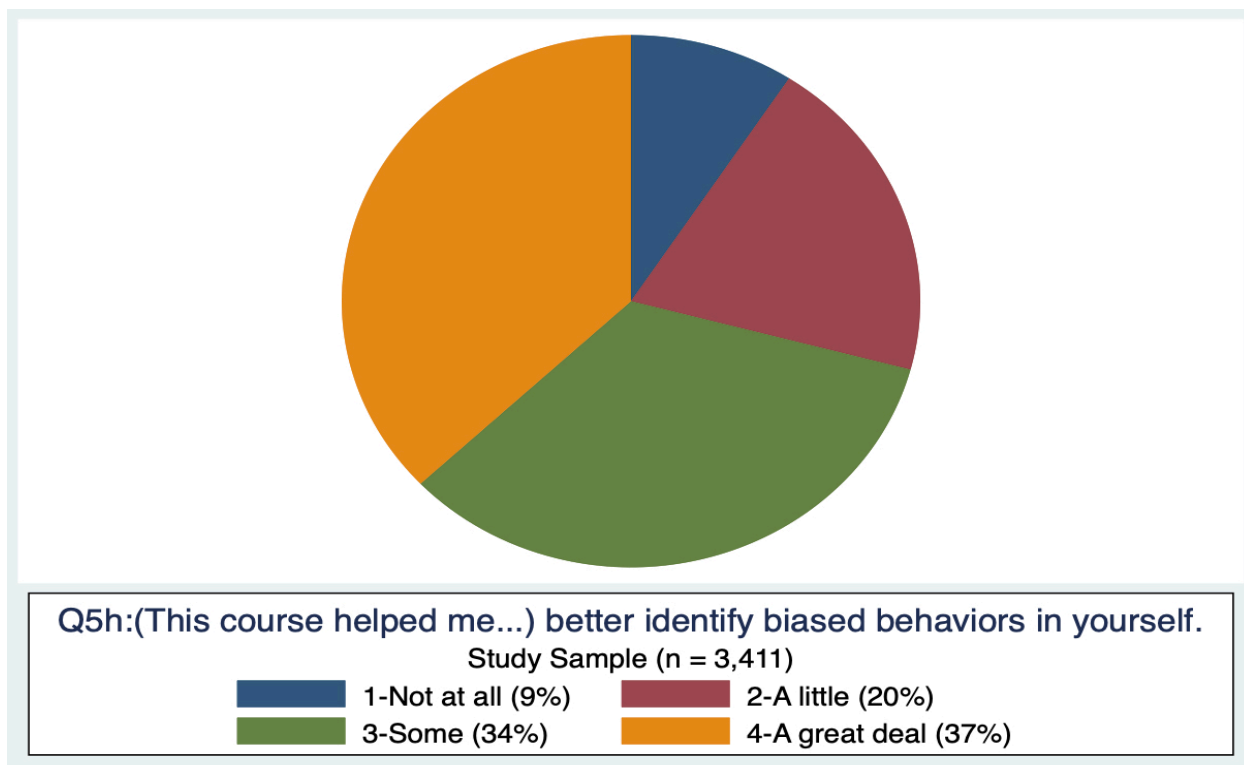


Figure 5:11 Responses to PSQ-5h: Better Identify Bias in Self

Figure 5.12 focuses attention on the data collected from question “5i” which wonders about the degree to which participating in this anti-Black racism course help students “identify ways to be antiracist.” This prompt, “5i”, is perhaps the one out of this set that is most central to the research question under consideration. Part of the utility and value of this prompt is the specific and intentional language used to frame it. Like prompt “5g”, which asks about recognizing biased behaviors and actions in others, prompt “5i” is explicitly connected to and derived from the “overall goals for the course” (see p. 9); namely: “...to develop strategies to be anti-racist in everyday life.” Hence, there are a number of reasons why the student responses to these two prompts, 5e and 5i, are saddled with a unique type of baggage that imbues them with a special significance.

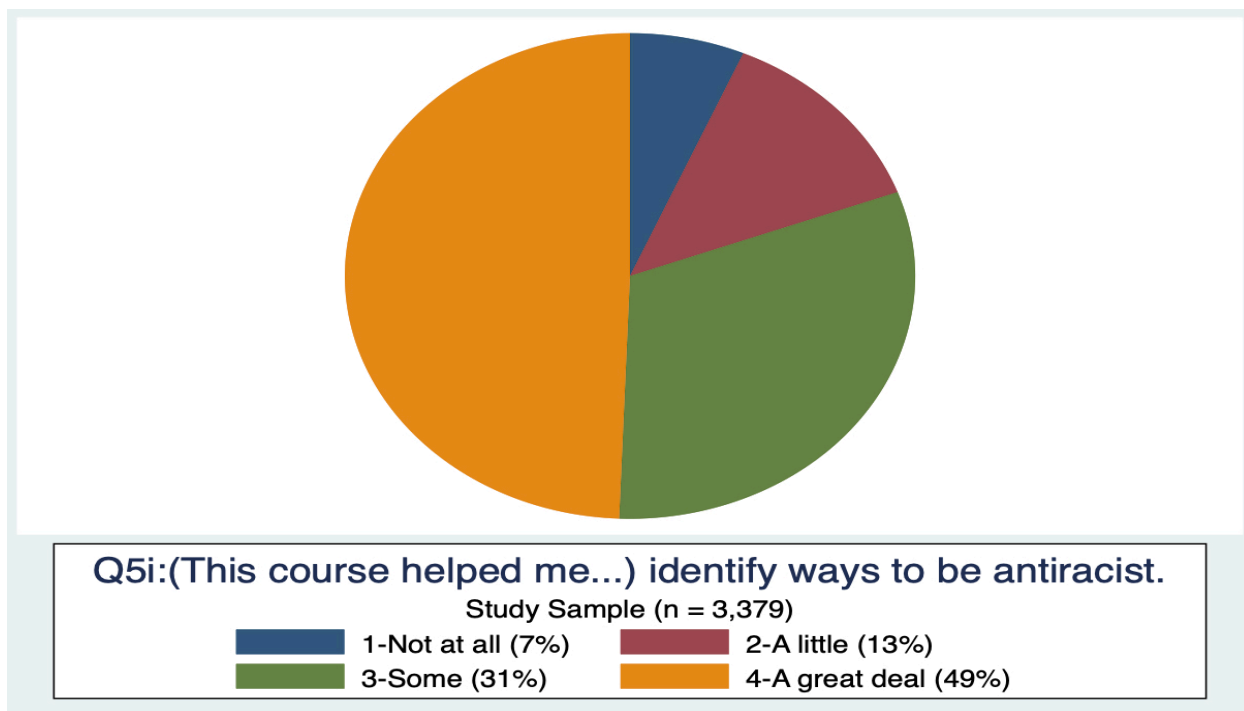


Figure 5:12 Responses to PSQ-5i: Identify Ways to Be Antiracist

The data captured in Figure 5.12 reveals a strong statistical affirmation that PITT 0210-Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance helped students “identify ways to be antiracist.” As much as 93% of students reported the course was helpful in this way. The largest percentage of students selecting the “a great deal” answer is observed in the data for “5i”. Almost 50% (49% exactly) of the respondents attested to receiving this degree of help. In the “some” category, another 31% were accounted; while that number reversed—13%--was the tally for those who claimed the course helped them “a little.” Achieving favorability levels of 93% each, make “5i” and “5e” the two prompts with highest proportions of agreeability.

Figure 5.13, provided courtesy of the Center for Teaching & Learning and the Office of the Provost, illustrates many of the quantitative findings covered in Section II of this chapter. Generally, most student responses trend affirmative at a frequency of 91 percent or higher.

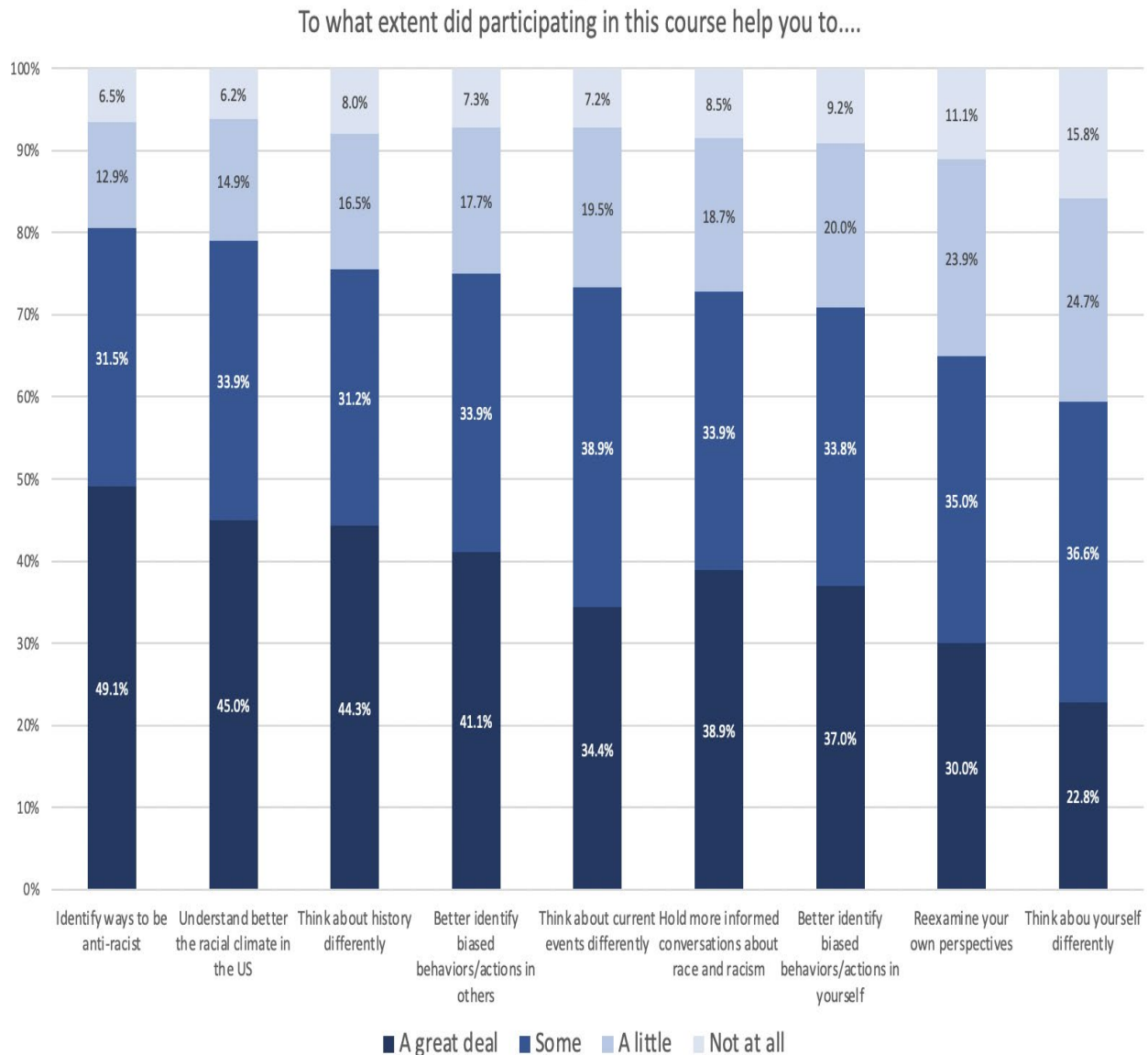


Figure 5:13 Graph-Student Responses to Post-Survey Questions 5a – 5i (Percentages)

5.3 Section III: Findings of Open-Ended Response Survey Data-Post-SQ-4

As discussed in chapter three, the post-survey for PITT 0210 included seven questions in total. The first three questions and the final question in the post-survey were a reprise of questions one, two, three, and ten on the pre-survey. Questions four, five, and six were the only questions unique to the post-survey. Questions four and six on the post-course survey were the only open-

ended questions on either survey instrument, allowing for and prompting students to provide qualitative responses by describing their experiences in their own words. Question four asked, “How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?” Question six asked, “Did you find this course valuable?” There were approximately 3,400 written responses to question four (Post-SQ4) and approximately 3,400 written responses to question six (Post-SQ6), bringing the combined total of written responses received on the post-survey to around 6,800.

This study incorporates the data gathered from the open-ended responses to post-survey question #4 only. While post-survey question #6 and the corresponding data are certainly of major importance—in general and for assessing students’ overall [articulated] reactions to the course—the focus of this study, and more specifically, the research question (RQ-2) at the center of this chapter, concerns on the capacity of this course in anti-Black racism to advance racial literacy in students. Post-SQ4 provides the more precise and direct path to ascertain this evidence by asking students: “How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?”

After several cycles of coding explained in Chapter III (on Research Design) the following data were deduced, induced, described, counted, measured, and organized into eleven categories. Each category has been assigned a Magnitude Value (MV), a Theme/Name, a Score (+/-), and Criteria, while Examples have been provided in each of the columns from right to left. Table 8 presents each of the categories with the details outlined above, with the numeric count and its corresponding percentage, out of a total of 1313 student responses analyzed.

As Table 8 illustrates, the “Ideal” category has a score of five plus signs, an MV of 10, represents 120 voices, equal to nine (9) percent of the sample (1313). The “Ideal” student response

reflects deep engagement with and a connection to course content, goals, and aspirations. The “Great” category has a score of four plus signs, an MV of 9, represents 370 voices, equal to 28 percent of 1313. The “Great” responses named two to four (2-4) course concepts/references and/or mentioned the need or instance of some form of antiracist action. The “Good” category has a score of three plus signs, and MV of 8, represents 490 voices, equal to 37 percent. The “Good” responses named one (1) course concept/reference or term or used adjectives that expressed favorability or an affirmative stance. The “Satisfactory” category has a score of two (2) plus signs, an MV of 7, represents 190 voices, equal to 14 percent of 1313. The “Satisfactory” responses voiced the minimal affirmative stance, i.e. “It did” and made no specific references to course concepts besides “race” and “racism”. The “Cryptic Currencies ” category has a score of one (1) plus sign, an MV of 6, represents 13 voices, equal to one (1) percent of 1313. The “Cryptic Currencies” responses indicated/implied: “Yes, but”, “Kind of”, “Somewhat”, but with a caveat. The responses could also be ambiguous but constructive.

The “Neutral” category has a score of zero (one plus sign and one minus sign), an MV of five (5), represents 40 voices, equal to three (3) percent of 1313. The “Neutral” responses, indicated/implied: “It didn’t really because I already knew/agreed” due to prior education or lived experiences. The “Minor Minus ” category has a score of one (1) minus sign, an MV of 4, represents 13 voices, equal to one (1) percent of 1313. The “Minor Minus ” responses indicated/implied: “It didn’t, because” and provided a variety of explanations. Or, said “not much/really.” The “Unsatisfactory” category has a score of three (3) minus signs, an MV of three (3), represents 26 voices, equal to two (2) percent of 1313. The “Unsatisfactory” responses indicated/implied: “It didn’t, because” and provided a critique of the course.

Table 8 Coding Categories for OER Sample – Post-Survey Question 4

Mag Val	Theme/Name +/- Score	Category Criteria & Examples	# of Ppl	% of 1313
10	Ideal + + + + +	The “ideal” student response. Reflects deep engagement w/ & connection to course content, goals, & aspirations.	120	9
9	Great + + + +	Named 2-4 course concepts/references and/or mentioned the need or instance of some form of antiracist action.	370	28
8	Good + + +	Named 1 course concept/reference or term or used adjectives that expressed favorability or an affirmative stance.	490	37
7	Satisfactory + +	The minimal affirmative stance, i.e. “It did.” No specific references to course concepts besides “race” & “racism”	190	14
6	Minor Plus +	Indicated/Implied: “Yes, but”, “Kind of”, “Somewhat”, but with a caveat. Ambiguous but constructive	13	1
5	Neutral b/c (Already “Woke”) + / -	Indicated/Implied: “It didn’t really because I already knew/agreed” due to prior education or lived experiences	40	3
4	Minor Minus -	Indicated/Implied: “It didn’t, because” and provided a variety of explanations. Or, said “not much/really.”	13	1
3	Unsatisfactory - - -	Indicated/Implied: “It didn’t, because” and provided a critique of the course.	26	2
2	Antithetical - - - - -	Explicitly stated: “It didn’t.” w/o any explanation provided	15	1
1	Who Me?	Students replied: N/A	8	.6
0	Ghost	Students left answer blank	38	3
n	Total		1313	100

**How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the US?*

The “Antithetical” category has a score of five (5) minus signs, an MV of 2, represents 15 voices, equal to one (1) percent of 1313. The “Antithetical” responses explicitly stated: “It didn’t” without any explanation provided, The “Who Me?” category has no score, an MV of one (1), represents eight (8) voices, equal to 0.6 percent of 1313. The “Who Me?” category represents the lot of students who responded, “N/A” to Post-SQ4. The “Ghost ” category has no score, an MV of

zero (0), represents 38 voices, equal to three (3) percent of 1313. The “Ghost” category is for those students who left the open-ended response opportunity provided by Post-SQ4, blank. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings, codes, and categorical qualities of OER data in great detail.

6.0 Chapter VI: Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses the findings associated with research question two (RQ-2), which asks: *What do measurable outcomes of quantitative and qualitative data reveal and suggest about the capacity of this core-curricula course in anti-Black racism to cultivate racial literacy [acquisition] in students who engaged the course?* There are three data sets with corresponding sample populations associated with RQ-2. The findings for two of the samples—the QTS and the OER—were presented in the previous chapter and are discussed in this chapter. The third data set associated with RQ-2 is the one derived from the focus groups. In Section II, the findings from the focus groups are presented and discussed in tandem. Section III discusses some critical reflections related to RQ-1, which was concerned with the process of how the ABRC came to be. In the following pages, these data sets are further explored and discussed, starting with the OER sample.

6.1 Section I: Making Meaning With the Open-Ended Responses

Returning to the data set and findings last presented in the prior chapter, there were 1313 open-ended responses under analysis. After several cycles of coding and analyzing the data alongside both emerging and established criteria, 10 categories were constructed to contain, combine, and classify and the great variety of open-ended responses represented in the more than 1313 student voices comprising the OER sample. The categories into which the OER data have been organized are presented in descending order from student comments that track closest to “an ideal response” to those student remarks resonating closest to antithetical and “anti-woke”.

6.1.1 “The Ideal Feel” – The Dream Team (10)

Starting from the top with the category labeled: “the dream team” —assigned a magnitude value of 10 because it represents most explicitly, the pinnacle of enthusiastic affirmation, intellectual alignment and/or personal resonance, amongst all responses analyzed. The number ten also correlates to the notion of “perfection” or a “perfect score, 10 out of 10.” Because the student responses elected to this category consistently represented what could be perceived as “perfect” or “ideal” for the [stated] aims of the Course in Anti-Black Racism, it was grouped under the heading: “ideal”. For example, imagine being the creator-designer of a course such as this one, with the same aims. Now imagine what you would want students to say. That is the idea behind the vibe of “the ideal feel” and the corresponding responses.

The student responses considered to be “ideal” reflected deep engagement with and/or a grounded connection to the course content, goals, and aspirations. Typically, the responses located in/to this category demonstrated at least one of the following: (1) named at least three major concepts, including systemic/structural racism, anti-Black racism, and/or some form of antiracist action; (2) expressed undergoing a significant learning boost; (3) advocated that this course be taught in K-12 schools or to all/grad students, too; (4) gave a robust response in which deep enthusiasm for the content was expressed; (5) shared personal anecdotes that illustrated personal growth/change and/or transformative practices; (6) discussed “structures of power and privilege” and/or “white-washed education” and/or the extensive, persistent history/pervasive web of anti-Black racism. Unlike the respondents in the next category, in which the expressed ideation of action was also under consideration, “ideal” responses articulated evidence of already acting (or made a strong claim of planning to). Clearly, this was an “ideal” response when looking for signs and confirmation of [progress towards] racial literacy acquisition and the cultivation of antiracist

ethics. Approximately, 120 responses representing nine percent (9%) of 1313 met the criteria for the “ideal” category. The following response illustrates the kind of responses that reflected the “ideal” criteria.

I think that the first module was the most helpful in my understanding. It's helpful to understand racism through a structural lens and that racist actions aren't necessarily overtly intentional. That taught me to not be offended or to respond defensively when someone says, "That's racist;" instead, I should listen to why and see what could be changed. The UT Austin fight song was a great example (from the Racism & Sporting Traditions module) - those freshmen from across the country didn't understand the context of that song, but after singing it for four years, would become attached to it. It's better to listen, understand, and make future changes rather than defend something you were doing without having the full understanding. I think that's my biggest takeaway.

Figure 6.1 presented on this page and the next, provides a snapshot of the 120 responses that met the criteria for the “ideal” category. See Appendix K for additional examples.

Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?
I am much more motivated to educating myself to better advocate for marginalized communities. I honestly had no idea so many of these injustices against BIPOC communities existed and knowing them now has made me more aware of the positions I take politically, how those opinions were influenced, and prompted me to educate myself in what I can do to help take strides towards the larger goal of equity in America.
It's just good to hear the other side of the story, the redlining, the horrendous Tulsa race massacre events, the post-Civil War Jim Crow laws, it's not stuff that gets talked about enough. This kind of course really should be a part of every school's curriculum.

Figure 6:1 Sample of Responses From the “Ideal Feel” Set (n = 120/9%)

<p>Participating in this course changed my understanding of race and racism in the United States in a way that allowed me to realize it occurs everywhere and everyday. That even before the tragic death of George Floyd, which enabled many Americans to realize the racism and discrimination of people that are African American or of an ethnic background different from Caucasian that exists daily. This course encouraged me to branch out and appreciate the different cultures that exist throughout the country and if I were to see any form of discrimination against one another, do something that is appropriate to help put an end to it.</p>
<p>Participating in this course greatly changed my understanding of race and racism in the United States. As a child, I was sheltered. I never believed there were any issues with race because there was never any that affected me personally. Growing up, however, I learned that simply wasn't true. I never really learned how race and ethnicity are social constructs, how current structures of power, privilege, and inequity are rooted in anti-Black racism, the history of Black radical tradition, and histories of resistance to anti-Black racism; and that really affected my views on the world. In the course, I was able to reexamine my own perspectives and take a step back to learn about the history and beautiful culture of African Americans that I can now apply to my own life before I form opinions and act on them.</p>
<p>Due to current issues in the United States, I had already been working to educate myself about racism in the US, including anti-Black racism. This course, and the materials provided, helped me better understand the history behind anti-Black racism, the inner-workings of anti-Black racism, and its large effect upon society today. I would say that while this course didn't introduce me to working on understanding anti-Black racism, it filled in a lot of the gaps missing within my information, some gaps which I didn't realize the severity of, such as disparities between healthcare and those most affected by COVID-19. I think this course was very beneficial to those that were already working on educating themselves and to those that hadn't yet started working.</p>
<p>Participating in this course gave me a deeper understanding of race and racism specifically at the institutional level. Before taking this course, I had minimal knowledge in structural and institutionalized racism and anti-black racism. After taking this course, I have a much deeper understanding on the structure of anti-black racism and how it is correlated within our institutional systems. I am now aware of the history and precedents within our government that are inherently racist and need to be redressed immediately to work towards an anti-racist society. This course brought racial issues to light that I had not known of before, and now I feel as though I am able to address these issues in my daily life in a more impactful way than before because I can now identify the issue and use the tools from this course to be anti-racist.</p>

Figure 6:2 Sample of Responses from the “Ideal Feel” Set Continued

6.1.2 “Great Minds Think Alike” – The Champions (9)

Moving on to “the champions” category—assigned a magnitude value of nine (9) to represent the next highest level of enthusiastic and affirmative responses analyzed for PSQ-4. The thematic names of this category match the responses contained in it, as well as invokes and summarizes both the commitment to the proposition and a *readiness* for action. The champions will—or are ready to—champion the antiracist cause. However, being ready to go is not the same as being in motion. Yet readiness is critical to being a champion and change agent.

In contrast to the “ideal” responses, when the “great” responses mentioned anything alluding to action, it was often in the realm of potential, rather than experiential. These “great” responses were often as verbose and robust as their “ideal” counterparts but did not explicitly ground or link their conceptual arguments in/to action steps, generally speaking. This “great” group represented 28% or 370 students out 1313. Typical responses in this category named two to four course concepts/references such as systemic, structural, or institutional racism, and/or mentioned the need or instance of some form of antiracist action agreed/expressed. Based on their written responses, they seemed to grasp the core concepts more tightly than 90% of their counterparts. However, these responses suggest these students are ready for some action (change/growth/metamorphosis)—grounded in the soil of the foundational ideas of racial literacy and antiracist ethics—just add more water and sunlight (read: information and encouragement). Figure 6.2 presents a glimpse of these “great” responses. See Appendix L for more examples.

<p>Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?</p>
<p>More than anything, it kept anti-black racism in the forefront of my mind all semester. It also provided me with the correct terms to discuss race and racism with those around me. I was also exposed to Black history more than I had ever been in an academic setting as well as the sociological background of race as a construct.</p>
<p>This course gave me a much greater understanding of how anti-black racism at a structural and institutional level. Before this course, I knew a fair amount about how anti-black racism operates on an individual level and how current events exemplify this, but to learn about something such as redlining and how these types of methods and rules have led us to a society where opportunity isn't as equal as we've always thought it to be is incredible. Learning about the Hill District really opened my eyes to how the past has really influenced our present and has placed certain individuals and areas at a disadvantage. Before this course, it was easy to think that the past is the past and plays little to no bearing on the present or future but as we've learned, that is definitely not the case.</p>
<p>I already knew that racism in the United States is a huge problem, but I would say this course did show me of current events that highlight this racism. I would say the course was best at covering modern racism and showing that racism isn't something that died out during the 1960s and is still a very prevalent issue today. Hearing people's experiences with racism in particular was definitely the most impactful in this course.</p>
<p>It allowed me to extent my thinking and really examine my privilege in order to use it for the better. A lot of the information in the course, I had not been taught before, even though I should have been taught it.</p>
<p>It really opens your eyes to the systemic and constant oppression of minorities throughout the United State's history. The nation likes to overlook many aspects of its own shortcomings even though there are many throughout its time. Race played an important role in the past in determining the futures of people and it continues to define many generations to this day. There has to come a time when the culture of racism ends and this discrimination is finally stopped.</p>

Figure 6:3 Sample of Responses From the “Great Minds” Set (n = 370/28%)

6.1.3 “Get in Good Trouble” – The All-Stars (8)

Named in tribute to the late, great John Lewis, as well as a nod to the notions that (1) the majority of people are “good”; and (2) “everybody is a star”—as Sly Stone put it, the next category contains responses coded as “good” and ranks eight (8) on the scale of magnitude value. Those in this group appear to have some command of the concepts, but their responses did not *explicitly*

indicate a readiness for action (unlike John Lewis). Yet, good actors and change agents often do not forecast or explicitly articulate their plans and are willing to do (like John Lewis). So, when considering their potential, the trajectory of their racial literacy acquisition could be fated towards “great”-ness. It is too soon to say; and true to life, all stars are not the same. Stars are composed of an array of elements and emanate in a variety of ways, as do the responses presented in this category.

The voices of the “all-stars” represent 490 students, which is roughly 37 percent of the 1313 participants of the OER sample—the largest contingency of all the categories. The criteria for responses contained in this group started with some form of, “yeah, [it did] ...”, then added context in one of the following ways: named one course concept; referenced a course module; showed a basic familiarity with racial literacy terminology or logics; or used adjectives that clearly expressed favorability or an affirmative stance. If the response contained one or more of those other parts but did not concretely articulate action, it met the criteria for this category.

As a great number of voices were represented in “the all-stars”, it was desired to provide a larger sample of their nearly 500 responses. Figure 6.3 to present a few samples from the category “good”. See Appendix M for more examples.

Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?
It added a lot of new information about history and facts regarding race and racism in the US, however I wouldn't say it necessarily changed any of my opinions.
This course enhanced my understanding of racism in the United States and provided evidence that structural racism still exists in this country.
It taught me much more about the histories of systemic racism in the U.S.
I know now how big of a role it plays. Before I was seeing a skewed perspective of a privileged white boy.
It helped me understand that racism is much more widespread than I thought, and that it is still a major problem in the United States.
It shed light on the untold histories and the deep-rooted structural and institutional issues in our country.
Participating helped broaden my background of race and racism in the united states beyond what it initially was.

Figure 6:4 Sample of Responses From the “Good Trouble” Set (n = 490/37%)

6.1.4 “Sounds Good” – Happy Campers (7).

The fourth category from the top, dubbed “sounds good”, contains the responses coded as: “Satisfactory” and equal to a magnitude value of seven (7). This category’s name captures the essence of what and how these, often, minimalist expressions of affirmation and under-articulated responses presented. The remarks produced by this group were among the most abbreviated of all the students who responded to this question. Typical responses in this category agreed to or expressed the minimal affirmative stance, i.e. “It did.” but generally offered no specific references to course concepts, lessons, or terminology (justice vocabulary) besides repeating back key words used in the question, like “race” & “racism”.

As modest and minimalist as the responses from the “happy campers” category were at times—not just in depth, but in terms of articulating favorability—they still resounded with a stronger affirmation than the two remaining “generally affirmative” categories filed below them.. In addition to magnitude value of this category (7)—numerical favorability indicator—the “happy

campers” outnumber the next two camps exponentially with regard to their representation figures. All three of these categories rank on the affirmative side of the spectrum, along with the three categories previously discussed.

Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?
I think this course primarily reinforced what I already believed from my own research over the past summer.
It didn't change much, it taught me more about the history but I already had a good grasp on a lot of the information
It helped me understand why people live in neighborhoods that are all the same race.
It put things into a broader historical context.
helped to understand it better
It gave me a different view of social and racial justice.
I understand more about what people have to do with
It helped me understand how racism is with us each day.
It gave me a different viewpoint on racism.
It changed my perception of racism in the United States
Made me understand more ab racism in the us
It helped me learn more
It made me more aware of those around me.
It helped me to understand how deeply rooted racism is in this country.
I now understand different perspectives of race and racism in the United States.
It didn't change that much, I mostly learned about the institutions.
I think it just helped solidify ideas I already believed in with facts.
It gave me more background information about black racism.
Gave me an awareness and alternate perspectives compared to what I was used to
It educated me more on the history of systemic racism in the US.
I now have a better understanding of structural racism that takes place in the United States.
Not too much. My views pretty much aligned with what they were teaching.
it opened by eyes and helped me understand just how prevalent racism was and still is in our society.
A lot
I definitely learned a lot.
It made me realize that there are many less obvious ways that racial inequality is perpetuated in society.
I learned more about minorities
To some extent. I believe I was more aware than others could have been. I took AP US History in high school and a lot of the history in this course was information I already knew.
This course opened my eyes to some of the overlooked ways of how black americans are discriminated against.

Figure 6:5 Sample of Responses From the “Sounds Good” Set (n = 190/14%)

Of the 1313 responses analyzed, 190 (14%) met the “satisfactory” criteria. Together with the other definitively affirmative groups: the “ideal”, the “great”, and the “good”; the “satisfactory” group creates a super-majority of 89% of the sample population. The remaining 11% is sprinkled amongst the remaining seven groups. Due to the patent brevity of these responses, Figure 6.4, shows a larger number of the 190 “Happy Camper” responses. See Appendix N for more examples.

6.1.5 “Cryptic Currencies” - The Dubious Others (6)

Trying to name this group of dubious responses led to a riff off “the Doobie Brothers” and produced the nickname “the dubious others” (neither used pejoratively) for this magnitude value six (6) category designated for responses that were coded as “minor plus” and read as either: ambiguous, ambivalent, bittersweet, balanced (critical and constructive), cryptic, dubious, vague, or too unique for other categories, like: “I’m a communist.” Hence the names, “cryptic currencies” and “the dubious others.” Because it is a complex bunch, each remark makes its own mark; possesses an idiosyncratic fingerprint; and lifts a distinctive voice. However, if there were a common thread connecting this array of generous—in terms of per-response word count—and to varying degrees, informative and/or instructive narratives and testimonies, it would be the thread of the caveat. Whether stated, indicated, or implied, the “Yes, but”, “Kind of, but”, “Well sort of, [but]”, and “Somewhat [but]” statements are one consistent feature and feel of the responses in this category.

There are two categories in this section of the study carrying the word, “cryptic” in their names. However, this category, “cryptic currencies” reflects the dubious responses that were not critical of or aimed at the ABRC as the source of their discontent or concern. What distinguishes these cryptic comments from their cryptic counterparts can in some ways be illustrated by the “glass half-full or half-empty” scenario. Between the two options, this category contains responses

more aligned to the former. Interestingly, there are only 13 voices represented in each cryptic category. That equals about one percent each (2% combined) of the sample population. What can be said about the “dubious others” category is that it welcomes anyone’s opinion; especially if it is stated with clarity, decency, and recognizable authenticity. Figure 6.5, showcases six of the comments from the “cryptic currencies.” See Appendix O for the rest.


Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States? 
<p>I am not a racist and never have been a racist. Being forced to take this course has made me understand more about the problem ongoing, but forcing people to learn about it is not the correct way to do it. I any 'racists' taking this course have actually changed their views.</p>
<p>It did not help much in all honesty. It provided good perspective but in a very inefficient manner.</p>
<p>American racism is deserving of rigorous academic scrutiny. Unfortunately, I feel that many institutions have largely responded in reaction to the problem of racism, instead of promoting proactive, initiative-oriented change. I partially attribute the historical stalling of social reformation and advancement to the continuous lack of investment our institutions make in order to actually find and develop individuals who are capable of fomenting change across different strata of our society.</p>
<p>This course provides me more information about African American history. However, it does not change my stance on race and racism in the United States as this course feels to me more like extra work than something i will take my time to do,</p>
<p>im a communist</p>
<p>This course taught me some great history of black racism and a lot about the current state of racism, but overall my personal beliefs did not change very much due to the assumptions and incomplete details this course was based on. I liked that this was something the university felt that all students should be educated on, because it is truly an important thing to talk about. If this course is to continuously be taught, I recommend that the course become more objective and less about seeing things strictly from a revisionist standpoint. The fact the the conclusion of this survey is a question about a person's politics is absurd. Thinking progressivism is the only solution to racism, and conservatism is the only thing holding it back is nonsense, and counter productive. A variety of policies can be used to end racism, but at the end of the day objective education is the only thing that will create new generations that are less racist than the one before them. Associating racism and antiracism with certain political groups will only further hinder progress.</p>

Figure 6:6 Sample of Responses From the “Cryptic Currencies” Set (n = 13/1%)

6.1.6 “Not Impressed” - Gray Daze (5)

The “gray daze” category is associated a magnitude value of five (5) and represents a somewhat neutral space. Gray is the intermediate color between black and white, and five is the intermediate number between zero and ten. Both five and gray are symbols of neutrality. This symbolic neutrality does not mean to suggest that the responses collected in this category should be read or described as neutral. However, their tones, in general, were also not polemical. Their tones read more like, “Not mad but not impressed.” Or, “No complaints, no compliments.”

There is an undeniable disagreeability expressed in this collection of remarks; which, to speak proverbially, gray days may cast a shadow over, but do not necessarily rain on the parade. The same could be said of these “gray daze”; and perhaps more importantly, these responses do not read as if they intended to shade, or throw shade at, the ABRC. Which is to say, most of these responses are not contentious, or written to contest or negate the potential of the course or its reason for being. Fortunately, for research purposes, the “gray daze” responses have more than four words to offer. Still, their words are not warm or sunny, nor terribly cold and frigid.

According to their testimonies, these students already knew what racism and/or anti-Black racism were; what they looked, smelled, tasted, and/or felt like—and this had come to be for one [good] reason or another. Remarkably, several students reported having learned about racial and social justice problems in their secondary schools. Others, especially those hailing from racially, ethnically, and/or economically marginalized communities and likely raised in racially, ethnically and/or culturally minoritized families, learned at home. In common parlance, they were already “woke” (to use the term as it was intended). Maybe they appreciated the spirit of the course despite seeming underwhelmed or unimpressed with the content of it. In a best-case scenario, the “neutral” group could be a pool of allies to racial literacy and antiracism. Perhaps reservists, if not on active

duty. In tragic-case scenario, these “veterans” could be weary, bitter, hardened, hopeless, depressed, traumatized, or worse, lazy, or apathetic. Either way, each one of these 40 (3% of 1313) voices had their own story to tell. Figure 6.6, displayed on the next two pages, exhibits all 40 of the “gray daze” responses to PSQ-4.

Note that even though most of these comments lead with a phrase or sentence that indicates disagreement with the proposition (*that the course had some impact on their understanding of race...*), the words that round out the comments provide the necessary context to catch the vibe, get a read, and understand the nature of the comments.

Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?
It did not, I am black with conscious parents.
Not particularly at all, it was a nice overview but not really in depth enough to provide new information to me, but I also came from a high school that taught us these things and therefore I already had much of the knowledge explained in this course.
it didn't. I already was aware of much of the extent of racism in the US.
It really did not change my understanding of race it really just educated me on the culture of African Americans and how much of an impact they made in the past.
My understanding remained mostly the same, many of the concepts discussed I had already known about. Racial issues have been everywhere over the last couple months which makes it difficult to not know anything about it.
It did not really change my understanding of race and racism in the united states. I feel I was taught well in high school about these topics and this was more of a review for me.
It didn't change my understanding in a meaningful way - aside from some new rote information, I had already integrated or entertained in passing most of the more abstract overarching theories here.
It didn't change much, if anything it just confirmed my previous beliefs
This course really hasn't changed much for me. A lot of what I learned were things already taught to me in high school.
It didnt change my view. I know racism is wrong and Ive realized it more when Trump was president.
I already knew racism was disgustingly high in the US and it needs to be stopped but our racist roots are so deep it's hard especially when racism is still being taught.
It didn't change it, it was just a reinforcement of what I hear everyday.

Figure 6:7 Sample of Responses From the “Not Impressed” Set (n = 40/3%)

6.1.7 “Cryptic Critics” – Unhappy Campers (4)

On the opposite side of the “neutral grounds” from the “cryptic currencies” (glass half full) category, weighing in at a magnitude value of four (4); and like its cryptic counterpart, representing 13 (or 1%) student voices... is the category coded as “minor minus” and called “cryptic critics.” The trend of the responses in this group is evidenced in the ways in which they resolve to disagree or deny change in some way, coupled with their willingness to say exactly why. Typical responses in this category expressed/indicated/implied: “It didn’t, because” and provided an ideological explanation; or “not much/not really.” But no one in this category simply said: “No!” without adding a “because” and then providing an answer. Like the other category with a similar name, these responses tended to be ambivalent or cryptic. It is noteworthy that the responses in this group did not blame much of anyone, including the course content or policies, for their dissenting testimony.

It is the use of quasi-negating phrases like, “not much”, “not really”, and “it didn’t really”, plus the shared inclusion of the most important conjunction in the English language: “because” that liken the “unhappy campers” category to the categories it is situated between: the gray daze and angry birds. This is the common characteristic shared by these three in the context of their relationship to PSQ-4. What distinguishes these three related groups of dissenting voices from each other are the angles they used to explain why they voiced dissent. The “gray daze”, in essence, said they had already been there and done that. The “angry birds”, basically lay their blame on the back of course in anti-Black racism. And the “cryptic critics”, well, they did not blame much of anyone, including the course content or policies, for their dissenting testimony. Figure 6.7, on the following page, displays all of the data for the “cryptic critics” category.

Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?



This course helped me to understand racism and different types of institutionalized racism that African Americans face on a daily basis. Although I agree with a lot of these statements, I feel like telling African Americans that they are in an inherent disadvantage to white people and other minorities, is outright evil and wrong. To tell these kids that nothing they will do will overcome racism and make a name for themselves is utterly wrong and should be outlawed. Anyone can do anything in the United States, it just takes perseverance and hard work, and to tell African Americans that they can't do these things is so awful. It makes them constantly in a victim mentality that allows them to create copouts on why they aren't successful. We need to teach that there is no color barrier and that we shouldn't see color, not that African Americans are victims and need to be treated with care. This course did exactly that, and not tell them that the United States is a fantastic place where anyone, no matter of skin tone, can succeed and make a name for themselves. Im almost ashamed they teach this here at the university of Pittsburgh, this course needs to be changed to teach that there is racism in the U.S, but not everywhere, and that this racism shouldn't impede your growth as a human and individual.

It did not I think that If someone wants to do something or wants something and they work hard they can achieve it no matter the color of their skin or where they grew up. its all about the choices that that person makes themselves.

It didn't really change my understanding

It really didn't all that much. But the bit about art created by black people in America was cool. I am always out for new pieces of art, and I thought the portion about black artists was cool and something I didn't know a lot about.

It did not change my understanding much at all.

Not much

It didn't change any of my views or opinions.

It did not exactly change my views on things

It didn't really

it had little to no effect

To be completely honest, I try not to acknowledge anything about race or anything like that I just want to live and not be bothered by anything like this or politics.

It did not really. It was never a big part of my life and never will be.

I do not think that is significantly changed my understanding in this subject.

Figure 6:8 All Responses From the “Cryptic Critics” Set (n = 13/1%)

6.1.8 “Ruffled Feathers” – Angry Birds (3)

In the penultimate position from the point of least satisfaction, is the category housing the responses coded as: “unsatisfactory”, described as “ruffled feathers” and nicknamed “angry birds”. With a magnitude value of three (3) and representing 26 of the 1313 student voices, or about two (2) percent of the sample population, typical responses grouped here consistently expressed, indicated, and/or implied: “It didn’t, because...” and then usually mentioned or provided a critique of the course.

The main difference between this group and the prior one is the decisive shift in the locus of responsibility for the dissent. Unlike the previous category, the responses in this group named variations of the same source of their discontent. They pointed their finger at some element of the course or the concept of formally teaching antiracism [or attempting to]. Examples of the critiques and complaints lodged against the ABRC included: questioning the accuracy of the course materials; not having opportunities for dialogue and group processing; being “made to feel bad” and “feel more stupid than before”; disagreed with some teachings, i.e. “ethnicity is a social construction”; it added extra work and felt like a chore; accusing the course of racial bias and being racist for focusing on anti-Black racism; “fueling a race war” and pitting “the African American community against the Caucasian community”. Figure 6.8 captures all of the responses from one of the most expressive groups on the scale.


Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States? 
<p>Honestly this course made me feel even more stupid then before taking it.</p>
<p>Racism is not something that is taught through a course, it is learned through growing up and what you are surrounded by.</p>
<p>This class did not significantly change my understanding of race and racism in the Unites States. Racism affects everyone in the United States, even whites, unlike what most people want to admit to. Minorities and African Americans are just as racist as most whites in this country, but we do not discuss that ever. This class focused on how blacks are "held back" by society, but what if we stopped making excuses for things and really look at how things affect everyone in society, not just a certain few. Racism affects every person in this country, but no one will ever discuss how whites are discriminated against, just like blacks and minorities are.</p>
<p>Truthfully, it didn't. I had taken multiple history and political science courses during my time in high school with teachers that never shied away from the harsh realities of discrimination and the reasons behind why it's being perpetuated. There was some information in this course that was not wholly correct and from an objective standpoint. It's important that courses attempt to examine the facts of issues from as unbiased a perspective as possible, which this course did a majority of the time.</p>
<p>In a large sense, it made me feel out of place and like a bad person. Fully understanding cultural differences and systems put in place to marginalize cultures is very important, but applying it to current times with biased and opinionated facts seems a little ethically wrong to me. I think there is a correct way to teach generations about acceptance and anti racism, but forcing us to all subscribe to one notion and idea of how it impacts everyday citizens across the globe is not exactly my idea of the right way. It made me aware of some aspects of history I had not previously been educated about and that is an accomplishment, but it also made me feel bad for being white with the notion being presented that I inherently possess all these biases. I commend those of other races trying to make a difference and I think it is important for the world to move forward, but there is unbiased education and there is also biased education and I do not think all ideas and lectures have been presented without some form of</p>
<p>This course did not greatly change my understanding of race and racism in the United States, because it felt often much more focused on culture and the arts, where I think what I needed more was tangible and physical solutions, outlines, ways to help and fix the systems, paths forward, and critical thinking on these issues. What I got instead was a history and ideology I have come to appreciate, but feel like I am without the tools or mechanisms to move beyond an appreciation.</p>

Figure 6:9 Sample of Responses From the “Ruffled Feathers” Set (n = 26/2%)

6.1.9 “Hated It” – The Anti-Woke Committee/Antithetical (2)

The final category to be illustrated and analyzed is the one with a magnitude value of two (2) and “the anti-woke committee” was given to capture The general tone of these curt replies can be sufficiently encapsulated in the blunt verdict: “Hated It”. The responses designated to this grouping were coded as, “Antithetical”, because the general sentiment exemplified the polar position of the “ideal” response, as well as the aims and objectives of the course. From disdain to distaste, these responses “say it all” using the least number of words possible; and usually just two: “It didn’t”. Whether or not their intentions—generally speaking—were aimed at achieving this rhetorical reaction from readers is immaterial to the impact, as well as to the point being made. In this case, “less was more” because the feeling these two- and three-word negations evoked was distinct from the other two- and three-word negations lumped in with the “cryptic critics“ group. Candidly phrased dissent in the previous category sounded more like: “not much” and “it didn’t really”. Just adding the “really” to “it didn’t” shifts the impact. even if only slightly. As folks *around the way* would say, “It hits different.”

The most striking differences observed between this category of dissenting voices, and the two, contentious categories preceding it, were their unique brand of blunt brevity and no explanation given/needed stance. “It changed nothing,” declared one of the voices from this group. Besides a few deviations, all the “antithetical” group had/wanted to say explicitly is: “It didn’t.” To be sure, the feeling... the hunch... the vibes spark the senses and imagination of possibilities, but it is the empirical data that confirms the hunch, intuition, or hypothesis; and removes the need to rely on “guesstimations”. Enter PSQ-6 (post-survey question #6) which asked students if they found the Course in Anti-Black Racism valuable. The presence of this question, in addition to the fact that enough members of the *Hated It* posse cared enough to answer PSQ-6 with complete

sentences that provided enough context to rid one of the *need* to read into the absence of text and explication. Although the results of PSQ-6 are not being considered in this study, they were studied in preparation for this study. As revealed above, the PSQ-6 data served as a resource to situate and contextualize the data from PSQ-4.

The “Antithetical” category represented 15 of the 1313 responses, about one (1) percent of the sample. Figure 6.9 displays all 15 of the responses from the “red room” crew, which represented about one percent of the OER sample.

Q4post: How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?	
Not at all. I am not racist.	
none	
Did not change	
It didn't.	
It did not change anything.	
It didn't.	
It didn't	
It did not.	
It changed nothing.	
It did not.	
not at all	
it didnt	
it didnt	
It didn't	
It didn't.	

Figure 6:10 All Responses From the “Hated It” Set (n = 15/1%)

6.1.10 The “Who Me?” (1) and “Ghost” (0) Categories

The final two categories accounted for and represented in Table 1 were labeled “Who Me?” and “Ghost”, respectively. The “Who Me?” category is represented by an MV of one (1) and a small group of eight (8) students who responded: “N/A” to this post-survey question. They equaled

about 0.6 of the sample population. The “Ghost” group referred to those 38 students who left no response at all to PSQ-4. Their absent voices represented three percent of the 1313 voices.

6.1.11 Conclusion

Overall, the findings from the student responses to the open-ended prompt posed in post-course survey question four (PSQ-4: “How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the US?”) suggested that the vast majority—approximately 88 percent—of students who completed the course, PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance, attested to some degree of learning growth in the areas of racial literacy and antiracist ethics. More specifically, 37 percent of the ABRC student sample demonstrated an increased awareness of and capacity to articulate multiple concepts that were raised in the course, as well as a desire to engage in antiracist actions or aims (see the “Ideal” and “Great” categories). An additional 37 percent of these students (see the “Good” category) were less specific in their descriptions of their new and/or course-specific learnings, yet they expressed similar sentiments as the previously described groups. Additionally, fourteen percent of the student sample reported a general and more generic affirmation of the ABRC’s positive contributions to their racial literacy. In contrast, eight percent of the ABRC student sample responded with comments that were ambiguous, neutral, unsatisfactory, oppositional, or antithetical to the goals of the course. Though these students were in the minority, their comments provide information that could help inform, refine, and ultimately improve the course. The remaining four percent was comprised of those students who refrained from answering the question.

6.2 Section II: Zooming in to Focus: Real Talk in Real Time

6.2.1 Understanding Race, Racism, and Racial Climate in the U.S.

The first official question asked of the students in the focus groups was a remix and fusion of post-course survey questions four (Post-SQ4) and five (Post-Q5e). Post-SQ4 asked: “How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?” Post-Q5e asked: “To what extent did participating in this course help you to understand better the racial climate in the US?” By combining the language contained in Post-SQ4 and Q5e, the version of question I posed in the focus groups—How did participating this course change *or enhance* your understanding of race, racism, and the racial climate in the United States?—intended to prompt responses to any or all parts of the query. I italicized “or enhance” because it was not until after the first focus group that I added that alternative phrase to the protocol to expand the capacity of this particular question to accommodate the opinions of students for whom the word “change” did not resonate.

Students who self-identified as “Black” or African American often—and understandably—experienced the course in anti-Black racism (ABRC) differently than did their counterparts of other racial/ethnic identities. For instance, students of African ascent (includes African Americans, Continental Africans, Afro-Caribbean & Afro-Latiné peoples) frequently reported and/or suggested that the ABRC enhanced and/or supported their understanding of race, racism, and racial climate in the U.S. more so than “changed” it. There were various reasons given why this was the case, including coming from households in which race and racism were familiar topics of conversation and some of the literature present in the home. Jiana’s testimony typified the experiences of other respondents from African American homes, when she said, “I really felt that it just supported a lot of things that I already knew. Because I grew up in a household that was

very research oriented, very literature oriented anyway, especially when it comes to things like racism, race in general, especially in America, especially the Black experience in America.” Students coming from this vantage point, often concluded that the course, like Jiana said, “just cushioned that a little bit and just supported what I already knew.” Or, like Briana, another African American woman in a separate focus group, phrased it: “I wouldn’t say it changed it. I would say it enhanced it.”

What may have been more of a learning moment for students of African ascent (African-Americans/Africans/Afro-Caribbean/Afro-Latiné/Blacks) is the raw exposure this course provided them to, as Jiana put it, “[have their] eyes opened to how [their] peers... interpreted this information.” Jiana explained that the ABRC, “definitely socially opened my eyes a lot more to how college students were looking at it.” Notice she invoked the word “socially” in the context of learning more about racism through the course. Her comment nudges the conversation forward and/or provides some foreshadowing to where one stream of this conversation is leading: the direct relationship between racial literacy and social literacy. Indeed, what Jiana, offered is an organic bridge between these two related literacies.

Ahmaud, another African American student, started where Jiana did by agreeing that the course in anti-Black racism “solidified what he already knew...” Yet, he followed with, “...but also it was nice getting a view of the history and the context.” Ahmaud went on to mention a few highlights that were triggered by this question concerning change inspired/related to the ABRC:

“There was one time we talked about indigenous relationships with Black people in history. Even Pitt’s relationship [with] the Black Action Society in 1960s and how the CIA and FBI were involved with that, that was this whole thing that I had no idea about—a part of Pitt’s history.”

Luke, a “white”, male student in a different focus group, zeroed in on the same lesson as Ahmaud when asked the same question: Did the ABRC change and/or enhance your understanding of race, racism, and racial climate? After saying “it definitely enhanced my understanding”, even though he was active in Black Lives Matter protests during the summer of 2020 and active in high school; Luke added, “there was a lot of information, specifically the stuff on the FBI unit that was in Pittsburgh, that was a big part. So, I definitely think that it definitely solidified a lot of what I understood and gave me a different perspective.”

What Luke and Ahmaud were referring to was the information that exposed the covert, domestic terrorist operation, COINTELPRO (counter intelligence program), executed during the 1960s-70s by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation under the 48-year administration of J. Edgar Hoover—a tyrant of white supremacist violence abusing and misusing the quasi-infinite resources of the U.S. federal government (which comes from the people paying taxes in the U.S.) to suppress, oppress, and annihilate a variety of human rights, civil rights, social justice, antiracist, anti-fascist, anti-war, anti-colonial, and liberation movements (site a source from the course readings). And yes, the University of Pittsburgh’s involvement was implicated in the systematic scheme of how this domestic terrorist enterprise infiltrated and attacked African American student- and community- activists and organizations in Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh. Government documents de-classified in the succeeding decades (1980s-1990s) revealed that individual employees at Pitt were working covertly as operatives for Hoover’s FBI. If one is familiar with the nefarious and systematic assassinations of the 39-year-old prophet El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X), the 39-year-old Reverend Dr. M. L. King, Jr., and the 21-year-old Black Panther chairman, Fred Hampton, Sr., they are [by default] familiar with Hoover’s diabolical “handywork” via his state-funded, anti-Black, anti-Chicano, anti-Indigenous American, anti-

Puerto Rican, and anti-liberation, domestic, terrorist agenda: COINTELPRO. Ahmaud and Luke were not alone in their recall of this particular course topic. In fact, the module on COINTELPRO was the one module identified most frequently in student feedback via focus groups and the open-ended post-survey questions.

Ahmaud attested to the idea that the course's deep dive into history that "made [him] understand how systemic all this stuff really is." Explaining further, Ahmaud said:

We talk about systemic racism all the time, but it's interesting to actually see how that comes to be and how that system becomes what it is in a sense, how it becomes itself." So that helped me solidify but also buoy my understanding of what was happening in the moment. It was apt with what was happening in summer 2020, protests... [because] it helped to give words to experience or words to feeling. It just gives you [the opportunity to acknowledge how these things actually happen.

Ahmaud's point about the course advancing his awareness of the systemic nature of racism was echoed across the responses gathered by the open-ended questions on the post-survey, as well as by the racially, ethnically, and socially diverse voices present in the focus groups. For instance, Claire, another African American, female student, made note of the course's success in conveying the complexities and dynamics of systematic racism and anti-Blackness: "I did like the fact that it brought out multiple dimensions and It was much more rich...". Hanna, a self-identified white, female student described a similar experience when she shared that before the anti-Black racism course, she "knew a lot more about individual people and how we end up with racist beliefs or implicit bias, but the course really showed me what the government does and the moving goalpost that keeps discriminating." Here, Hanna is referring to the persistent, capricious, and catastrophic nature of systemic anti-Black racism. With a hint of exasperation or intellectual frustration, she

said: “We finally fix an issue, and then they move to something else that causes a similar issue.” So, for Hanna, “the course was really good because of how broad it was [at] illustrating how it’s just been a lot of like... a lot of bad \$#!+.”

Indeed, so much bad “*ish*” that “proper” words sometime fall short or simply fail at capturing the visceral energy of a person’s thoughts. So much bad *stuff* has happened and continues to happen that Hanna would not be constrained by social mores when discussing this point. Yes, much harm has been done in the names of whiteness, colonization, and manifest destiny; and the course in anti-Black racism approached this complex subject matter with contemporary scholarship, relevant data, and delicate attention to nuance. What students were exposed to in the ABRC was “not just the same old, okay... they were slaves, they were beat, they were killed, and all this other stuff,” said Claire, an African American woman with previous course and work experience in topics of race and social justice. “It gave a much better appreciation for the approach on the subject because a lot of times I end up feeling quite offended by classes like that. And this one did not do that.” On the contrary, Claire proceeded to reveal a bold, yet vulnerable, personal truth—one that [further] distinguished her commentary from the African American students in the other focus groups—when she confided that foremost the ABRC “gave me a much better appreciation for being Black.”

While Claire claimed her experience with the ABRC gave her a “better appreciation” of the racial climate in the U.S. and of her racial identity/social location within it, Suzi named her experience as “really validating.” As a female, Chinese American student who hails from a “very white, predominantly white, school and area,” with a political climate she first described as “more moderate” but then decided “a little bit conservative” was a more fitting portrait—Suzi revealed that her schooling in the U.S. did not teach “a lot of those issues and a lot of history that... really

came to light through that course. And it felt like a lot of my own feelings, even not being Black but just being a person of color, it was really validating to learn that as something that's true and not just a political opinion.”

As 76 percent of the first-year students at the University of Pittsburgh hail from suburban and rural homes, and approximately 85 percent self-identify as white (65%) or Asian (19%), informed inference surmises that most students enrolled in this university who attended schools within the United States, graduated from high schools that were predominantly populated by “white” people. The large number of Asian students at Pitt—the survey data does not disaggregate Asian-American and Asian but the University of Pittsburgh enrolls very large number of students from China—who attended Chinese schools that were not predominantly populated by African Americans.

“Race matters” in this context; which is to say that racial representation and ethnic composition in student, staff, faculty, and administrative populations in schools has been demonstrated to affect various elements of school [racial] climate (Milner, Delale O’Connor, Murray, Alvarez, 2016). For students like Suzi, who’s high school echoed of silence on topics of race, racism, and anti-Black violence, this “elephant in the room” can be isolating and/or confusing. To be clear, this terrible hush heard across classrooms in the face of rampant and increasing anti-Black violence and escalating incidents of state-sanctioned murders caught on camera, was not enacted for the sake of the students, nor at their request. To the contrary, students were curious about the real world outside of their schoolhouse bubbles. As Suzi recalled, “I did my own research and talked about issues with friends and stuff like that. But I think I never had formal education about [these] topics...”.

In trying to make sense of the blatant, systematic, and systemic absence of Black Studies, antiracist, and social justice/social problems coursework in the curriculum without blatantly indicting the system(s of white power/oppression/cultural hegemony/global colonization), Suzi offered this telling insight: “I feel like a lot of the issues like systemic issues are seen as political and then therefore it's not taught in schools because it's sort of invalidated since it feels opinion-based, sort of. So I think it was really valuable to learn things as fact.” Suzi’s explanation is timely against the backdrop of a nation engulfed in a tidal wave of “anti-CRT” and “anti-Woke” legislation (Kelly et al., 2023). Suzi’s ultimate word: “fact” is crucial because what she meant by it was reflected in the reports of several students. There was a common claim held by many graduates of the ABRC that the course succeeded in presenting “facts” and findings that introduced them to and/or fortified their knowledge and understanding of the hushed histories and current events that have co-created the ongoing racial climate in the U.S.

Race mattered as well to other ABRC students navigating similar and different contexts in their hometowns, neighborhoods, and high schools. For instance, Luke, who grew up in a conservative suburb he described as “97 percent white” and approximately 20 minutes outside of Pittsburgh, had never been had a non-white teacher, let alone one of African ascent, until he was auto-enrolled in the ABRC in the fall semester of 2020. Luke’s testimony may not be as rare as one would think in such a racially diverse “nation of immigrants” and “land of opportunity. However, there is no shortage of data to support the notion that Luke was not speaking for himself only when he transparently revealed that the course in anti-Black racism was “the first time for me being in a course with a person of color as a teacher or professor.”

Similar to the demographic snapshots of the school environments and experiences Suzi and Luke narrated, Laine invoked her high school during her discussion of racial climate in the U.S. in

relationship to the course in anti-Black racism: “Yeah, I definitely think it enhanced my understanding of all of that. Obviously, I’m white. I grew up in an area that was mainly white people. My high school was 98% or more white kids. There was very little diversity.” Sound familiar? Like her counterparts in the focus group, Laine was refreshingly honest, willing to be vulnerable, and grappling with increasing self-and social awareness: “So I don’t want to say I was ignorant about everything, because I was aware of racism. I knew about all that, but I definitely think this course was much more in depth and made me more aware of things.” Laine proceeds to convey a basic yet vital social justice vocabulary lesson that most U.S. Americans never learned. “For example, it sounds strange,” Laine admitted, “I didn’t know the difference between equity and equality and it’s something so simple, but having the course distinguish those was very helpful for me.” What percentage of people in the general public can distinguish and define equity and equality in clear, precise language?

This final point by Laine about justice vocabulary triangulates to hundreds of student post-survey responses which echo similar claims, and back to an earlier point voiced by Ahmaud concerning the ABRC’s value in providing relevant and efficacious vocabulary to effectively communicate his feelings, experiences, and observations. This topic of critically-informed language and justice-minded vocabulary is the focus of the following post-survey findings.

6.2.2 Race Talk Literacy: The Conversation Peace

Exploring more deeply the concerns raised in post-course survey question “5f”, which asked: “Did participating in this course help you hold more informed conversations about race, racism, and anti-Black racism?” I followed up with the focus group participants about this prompt.’ The responses gathered from the focus group participants provide some texture to the raw numbers produced by the survey data presented in the previous chapter. Out of the focus group interviews,

four major themes emerged: *instructive vocabulary*, *critical discernment*, *greater confidence*, *historical facts/data resources*. These findings resonated with and reminded me of this passage from Bolgatz' text: "Racial literacy can support students in "becom[ing] more conscious, more critical, and more confident. Racial literacy allows us to create contexts where thoughtful and provocative interactions occur" (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 18). Each of these themes surfaced across the focus group conversations, and five of the participants discussed the themes in ways that are useful to read in their unique tone, cadence, and diction. One student voice has been selected to speak to each theme. Notably, the theme of instructive vocabulary was reiterated across the other themes.

6.2.2.1 Instructive Vocabulary

Picking up where she left off, and at the same time amplifying the exact observation articulated [by Suzi] in a separate focus group, Laine explained: "[W]ith my high school, I just don't even think we were asked to have those conversations. We were never even prompted to think about them, talk about them with each other." Apparently, Laine and her former high school counterparts are all too familiar with that echo of grave silence and deafening hush. "And..." Laine continued, "I think not only did this course ask those questions, and make you think a little bit more, but it also provided me with the vocabulary to even have those conversations to express where I was on the issues and what I was learning and figuring out for myself on the issues and all that kind of stuff. So I thought that was very helpful."

6.2.2.2 Critical Discernment

Speaking of vocabulary, Ahmaud, a Classics major, possessed a bright intellect which reflected in his vocabulary. In this particular excerpt, the theme of critical discernment was at the forefront of Ahmaud's reflections. Between two instances of giving voice to critical discernment, he touched on the instructive vocabulary theme as well—underscoring its importance and

popularity among various participants from diverse backgrounds and experiences. In general, Ahmaud's typical speaking cadence was fast and choppy. Words, word-stems, and conjunctions would often get swallowed in his verbal flow. This feature of listening (and transcribing) to Ahmaud is only notable in this context because his content was so rich, one would not want to miss a word of it.

I guess it makes you feel more discerning and more critical, I guess, in the sense of things that I see happening, whereas before I might have been more oblivious, kind of glanced over them, like, "Okay, maybe I shouldn't say this," or "That feels [like] something that's wrong, but I don't know quite what,". But now it gives you, again, the ability to put words to things that happen historically and things that... How they have bearings on things that are happening now. So this makes you, I guess, more readily available to engage in these topics and this makes you more [like], "Okay, something here is not right, and I know for some reason it's not..." You can articulate what that is [now]. This course I think is really helpful with that.

6.2.2.3 Greater Confidence

Suzi's response to this question about the helpfulness of the ABRC with regard to holding more informed conversations about race and racism reflected her deep, analytical intelligence. She covered significant ground in the course of sorting out her thoughts on the matter. From the top, Suzi—a Studio Art major—pinpointed the third theme: greater confidence, then moved quickly through a number of thoughtful considerations and critical analyses and concluded with a word on the power of access to historical facts. Her commentary ultimately illustrated a web of important elements that are instrumental to engaging in literate conversations about race. In this excerpt,

Suzi's remarks flow like a stream of consciousness, are more circular than linear, and offer a complex analysis along with a more candid critique of systemic forces:

I think it gave me more confidence in being able to have these conversations. I think just having access to that information and knowledge that we're not taught most of the time in public school or something like that. Because I feel like I had a lot of more heated debates or arguments with people around me at the time about race and stuff, because I grew up in a more conservative-ish leaning area. But I think a lot of the time it's really frustrating because you can't necessarily articulate or you know what you know is true as lived experiences or observed things, but you don't have like the language to necessarily explain that to people. And I think that's probably something intentional, because knowledge is power. Not being able to articulate and communicate certain things is what keeps communities of color and other marginalized groups oppressed. So I think just having that bank of information... I went back to that Canvas module even after the course ended; and I think it just gave more validity to conversations that I was having and be being able to say, "Here are actual facts and history that you can't really dispute with."

6.2.2.4 Historical Facts & Data Resources

As telegraphed, Suzie's testimony delivered; and provided a vivid context for the fourth theme: historical facts/data resources, which Luke covered in his response to the same question. In this excerpt, Luke names the theme, then slides immediately into demonstrating how a literate conversation about race may transpire if he were involved. Regarding the course in anti-Black racism, Luke said, "it gave me resources where it was like, *Okay. Well, I'm not just spouting this! And I didn't just get this from an Instagram infographic. This is things from people that have PhDs and are, again, experts in their field. And they're saying these same things.*" The diction used by

Luke plays on an implicit point concerning the exclusive access to and authority of expert knowledge and academic scholarship versus the public access to and free-flow of amateur and/or unrefereed scholarship and mis-/dis-information campaigns shared on social media outlets.

Any person attempting to engage in or manage an informed or literate conversation involving racial topics needs facts, supporting evidence and relevant data to hold their ground, let alone persuade or convince a skeptical, under/mis-educated, or stubborn audience. Therefore, when Luke highlighted this particularly practical utility of the course content, it made obvious sense. Having access to data resources and getting familiar with historical facts is not only a privilege, it is an advantage. As Luke stated about the content of the course in anti-Black racism: “It would give me a lot more... not so much validation, it's just like supported research. And things that are backed up by facts and stuff. And not just my opinion.” Bella agreed; and offered the following: “Having examples of specific events of things that happen can help push a conversation. And it can be examples of really cohesive teamwork, within a community, or it could be examples of really tragic events and they all help drive a conversation that might need to be had.”

6.2.3 Antiracist Sensibilities: The Outward Gaze

The robust consensus weighing in at 93 percent in support of the proposition that the course in Anti-Black Racism helped them better recognize biased behaviors in others was reflected in the responses offered by the focus group participants. The definitive nod to this notion, alongside the intellectual and emotional activity generated by the query, was evident across participant responses, and especially vivid in Jiana’s voice and playfully animated account. Additionally, the relationship between what this question and the one preceding it are asking is effortlessly exemplified in the logics of Jiana’s thought process.

After agreeing that the ABRC “definitely” helped her with racial literacy skills, Jiana, in her own way, expressed that the course assisted her in those tough-love moments with friends by “giving me more confidence to actually be like, *Hey, don't say that. I can tell you why. Just don't say that.* But family, definitely with family, especially with other intersectional issues and [I’m] just like, *No, I can literally give you an entire explanation.*” And for Jiana, the act of naming a racial injustice or racialized aggression and proclaiming a harm done or stance of solidarity does not end with her friends and family or only occur in person. As Jiana, explained: “Twitter! I will rant on Twitter all day every day, but definitely especially with my more personal life, just like, *Hey, because you're my friend and my family, I love you. You need to know this because what you're saying is just wrong.*” Note how she touched on the confidence factor theme discussed above in the findings for question “5f” and bridged it, not only to her ability to recognize biased behaviors, but to also address them. The latter, according to Ibram Kendi (2019) and the definition of “antiracist” stipulated in this study, would qualify as an antiracist act.

Despite participating in a separate focus group, when responding to the prompt presented in this question, Ahmaud leaned into the same notion voiced by Luke’s response to the previous question. In that sub-section, under the theme of “historical facts/data resources”. Luke discussed the access to and delivery of factually sound data resources as a benefit of the ABRC. For a second, Luke struggled to find his preferred term when the word “validation” did not seem to capture his point. While describing a parallel experience, Ahmaud echoed a rich concept that Jiana—who spoke before him—introduced into the conversation. The conceptual word was “credence”—a word Luke may have wanted to borrow during his testimony. Replying to whether the course content helped him better recognize bias in others, Ahmaud explained that taking the course, “...adds credence, and it gives you concrete foundations on which to make concrete observations.

And I think it's definitely helped.” There again is that link between the findings in this question and the previous one; between gaining clarity and confidence (5f) and courageous thoughts and actions (5g).

Before a second passed between his last word and the next, Ahmaud—a graduate of a college-prep, boarding school in the Northeast region of the country—connected and reflected on his experiences, from which he drew rich meaning. “I mean, also having gone to mostly white institutions in my life, you see the multivalence of how whiteness exists and how it functions and how it works as this almost benign construct in a sense where it's just such a default that just everything else is outside and othered by it,” explained Ahmaud. “Everything else is other,” he continued, “us versus them. And I think having gone to like, again, a PWI my whole life, but especially seeing it at Pitt now in a much larger setting, you see more of how whiteness works in a sense.” This last sentence uttered by Ahmaud hits on a different but loosely related debate concerning the benefits of attending HBCUs versus PWIs. Ahmaud’s point about how operating in “white” spaces serves as useful intel when it comes to navigating whiteness, is frequently posited as one of the few, but key, benefits of attending a PWI. Access to a larger pool of material resources (including scholarships) and career-related social capital are others.

Exposure matters, certainly. If literacy—education → knowledge → skills → growth → transformation—is the objective, exposure is fundamental to the process of achieving it. Exposure is necessary. Yet, to speak proverbially, it is only the tip of an infinite, dynamic, ever-evolving iceberg. Exposure is a good place to start, but nowhere to stop. Many more steps are required in order to know “the other”; especially when that “other” comprises a whole group of intricate human beings. Suzi’s remarks in response to the prompt posed in this question reveal the harmful consequences of under-exposure to African Americans via [intentionally designed and maintained]

racially segregated spaces in a racially diverse country. “[G]rowing up in an environment without a lot of Black people, I think there's a lot of...” Suzi hesitated, then rejoined: “I mean, even prior to the course, I was definitely aware of biases. I think there's a lot of anti-Black racism in the Asian community.” That part! There was a dubious moment, but Suzi “kept it 100”—to borrow language from my peers.

When observing and considering Suzi’s breaks in thought, shifts in cadence, and mental pivoting while speaking in the focus group (and reflected in the transcript), I read them as visible traces of self-censoring sensors eliciting neuro-transmitters signaling her brain to avoid exposing what arguably could be called a “known-unknown” about her (native) community—the “Asian-American community”—Suzi mustered the confidence and courage to be *that* transparent, honest, and by default, vulnerable. It was a racial literacy “test” in real-time, Suzi showed up for it. For Suzi to expose the raw reality of an unprovoked, unwarranted, and unexamined anti-Black racism percolating in the Asian-American community, albeit beneath a solemn silence and collective hush, is an antiracist move, indeed. In her conclusion, Suzi said anti-Black racism in the Asian American community was “definitely something that I was always aware of; but I think the course definitely made me reevaluate a lot of that.” Suzi’s final remarks were not only fitting for her purposes, they could be extrapolated to speak for many others, Asian Americans, and non-Asian Americans alike.

For Laine and Luke, the concept of microaggressions discussed in the ABRC seemed to be the most memorable and salient connection between the course content and their attempts to suss bias in others. “I just didn't know about some of the small things that you wouldn't think you'd have to specify, [like] the course talked about microaggressions. I didn't know what those were,” admitted Laine. Yet, once she understood what microaggressions look and sound like, Laine said,

“I’ll notice it more and I’ll be like—even if the person that did it didn’t think it was an issue—I’ll be like, *That might not be the right way to do something, say something.*”

That is essentially the exact scenario Luke experienced and recalled for the focus group. His disclosure of a sacred part of his personal life is instructive in that it highlights the labor, risks, sacrifices, and commitments that come with practicing antiracist behaviors. “So my girlfriend at the time, she had said a microaggression, right? I got very upset. This was before we had talked about microaggressions. And then about a week later, whenever microaggressions were covered, she came back to me and said, *I guess you were right about that.*” On multiple levels, and with lively, telling imagery, the students shared snapshots of their interactions with others when and where detecting (and responding to) bias is concerned.

6.2.4 Antiracist Sensibilities: The Inward Gaze

When the students in the focus groups were asked to turn the mirror upon their own biases, However, this question (5h) is exemplary of one of the more complicated moments in the art and science of designing a survey, assessment, lesson, or entire course about race, racism, and racial violence intended to be universally experienced/consumed by a racially diverse audience. Before engaging the students’ responses, just consider for a moment what it *might* feel like for a victim of anti-Black racism to be asked if a course in anti-Black racism helped them better recognize racial bias in themselves. It is a complicated matter, to be sure; and one that resists being essentialized. For now, suffice it to say, the replies given by Jiana and Ahmaud were outward facing, even though they were asked to look inwardly.

Revisiting themes previously explored in question 5f, Ahmaud, does his best to find an authentic entry point when the opportunity to respond to the prompt posed in question 5h was presented to him. “It just gives you... arms you with knowledge and context or how to just give

words to your experience and these like...". Ahmaud paused, thought for a second, and then admitted, "It didn't really change." Adding nuance to his candid testimony, Ahmaud explained:

I think it gave me more examples to make, [like] *Oh, this happened, its connected to this*, for example. And it makes you broaden your perspective and your role through certain things. *Oh, this issue is happening here*. How it affected this one, for example. So I really think it gives you, I don't know, power to... Not bolster your arguments, but it gives you... You have knowledge. So basically it get makes you able to give words, like, *Oh, I can say this about to this certain topic, this example, this instance in history*.

Ahmaud's account resonated with Jiana, who attested in her own diction to the notion he forwarded. "It just gave me the confidence to just put more credence to the beliefs that I already had and just be like... I can actually support it with real evidence and real tangible things and just be like, *Hey, this has happened*. Or like, *This is what is going on right now*," said Jiana. "And it's definitely made me want to go out and just research a lot more and just..." she added before starting a fresh sentence, wherein she introduced another important concept that is core to the common "justice vocabulary." Jiana pivoted to: "Especially when it comes to intersectionality and just putting these two and two ideas together and putting all the puzzle pieces together, just be like: *Hey, this thing is connected to this thing connected to this thing*." Indeed, for Jiana—and even, Ahmaud—the ABRC was useful, not necessarily for detecting [anti-Black] bias within their own victimized "Black" bodies/lives, but certainly for, as Jiana put it, "Just showing how all these things align and how all of them come together to remind you that these things are very important for us to really address." Ending her piece on a note of action would align Jiana's comment with an antiracist ethos.

The following responses offered by non-African American/non-“Black” participants do the heavy lifting of one, exposing the “elephants in the room”, and two, bringing to bare one of the main reasons Sydney Massenberg was motivated to petition for a Black Studies course to be required for all Pitt students. Stated otherwise, the rich, revealing testimonies that follow showcase exactly why the Course in Anti-Black Racism was created. And that is: for those who are un-hunted, non-targets of anti-Black racism to face and grapple with their own anti-Black bias. The official language of the ABRC is not as explicit as the explanation just provided, yet it upholds it. Of the three overall course goals stated in the 2020 syllabus, two of them are relevant to this point: “to acquire the knowledge to be able to recognize and challenge racist policies and practices,” and “to develop strategies to be anti-racist in everyday life.” Recognizing and challenging racist practices includes one’s own (racist practices). And striving to be antiracist in everyday life necessarily involves self-work.

Laine’s response to this question about recognizing internal bias sets the stage: “So whenever racial climate and things like that and racism would come up, I’ll admit it now because I know I’m not that way anymore, but I think like, *Oh, well that’s just their problems. Everyone has problems.*” Is this not a familiar refrain; and perhaps a familiar feeling for people who have been taught to “other” any number of persons or things that are unlike them or unfamiliar to them? “But of course it’s been challenged a lot more since I got out of that bubble,” said Laine. Reflecting further, she concluded: “And I definitely think I’ve changed since then.” The “post-ABRC” Laine realized and was able to articulate, “It’s not as simple as just problems. It’s a whole systemic issue that everyone has to think about.” Then, without any prompting, Laine added: “and it’s just like... I think it was pretty good that they forced... That freshman were required to take it because it

challenged my beliefs right out the gate.” To be sure, that is a profound testimony and strong finding with regard to the hopes and intentions of the course creators.

If that was not enough of a nod to the ABRC, Laine had another fascinating insight to add. As a result of taking the course in anti-Black racism during the first semester of her freshman year, Laine—a second semester sophomore at the time of the focus group interview—was in an ideal position to offer this crucial data and make the following claim. “So, I’ve had this time at school since then to work on that and actually pay close attention to that. So I definitely would say that my views have greatly been changed since it.”

Later in the interview, while responding to a different question, Laine made remarks that signaled she was still thinking about this particular question (5h) and her responses to it. It seemed reasonable to incorporate here the comments she made at other points in the focus group interview related to recognizing internal anti-Black biases. Speaking of the course content, Laine explained, “It just made me more aware of the things that... I guess in the moment you’re like, *Oh, it’s nothing*. But if you think back about it, like, *Oh, I shouldn’t have said or done that. That was something and it could have meant a lot more to another person than it did personally to me.*” In other words, as Laine was introduced to racial microaggressions through the ABRC, she saw within herself space to cultivate some/more human compassion.

Likewise, Luke reported that he thought the ABRC “definitely” helped him with self-interrogation of anti-Black bias. “I think it added on to the whole, I guess the massive amount of kind of reanalysis that I was going through as a white person who was...”, said Luke. “I had always considered myself, *Oh, I’m not racist*,” he admitted. “But I think it added to that idea of anti-racism and realizing that we can all work on those sorts of things and that I did have biases and work on

that. Luke: And I think it added to myself because I was trying to do active work to be anti-racist. And it's obviously a process.” Luke is clear about that.

Suzi was able to bring a whole new component to the conversation. When asked about the relationship of the ABRC to her capacity to recognize [anti-Black] bias within, she situated it the contexts of her high school and home[town] community. “There are maybe maximum five Black people that went to my high school,” she began. “And so I think being in a predominantly white space growing up or a predominantly Asian space, a lot of times when you try to...”, Suzi paused. Then shifted to: “When I was learning about a lot of anti-Black racism in the country and worldwide, I think it sort of paints a picture of Black people as only being oppressed and being sort of not multifaceted in that way. And I think that really does a disservice to Black communities and communities of color in general.” Here, Suzi provided a clear context for what she mentions next, but only mentions: “So I think that was a personal bias that I probably had that the course made me reexamine.” Suzi quickly turned her gaze outward, “And I think, yeah, for people around me too. Because, again, growing up in an environment without a lot of Black people, I think there's a lot of...”. Suzi slowed and refocused: “I mean, even prior to the course, I was definitely aware of biases.” Then she peered outward again and reiterated: “I think there's a lot of anti-Black racism in the Asian community.” Suzi then closed with an internal snapshot: “So that's definitely something that I was always aware of, but I think the course definitely made me reevaluate a lot of that.” Suzi’s testimony was honest and telling. Recognizing and naming racist ideas, actions, and policies are major first steps in racial literacy and antiracist ethics.

6.2.5 Cultivating Antiracist Ideations, Identities, & Actions

Due to the centrality of post-course survey question “5i” to this study, as well as the relatively less familiar concept—*antiracist*—at the heart of the question which asked: *To what*

extent did participating in this course help you to identify ways to be antiracist?; I reframed and contextualized the question for the students in the focus groups using the following language: If being anti-racist means actively identifying and challenging racist policies, did participating in this course inspire you to be anti-racist? And if not, please say so. If it did, did it help you identify ways to be anti-racist in your daily life? So, it's a two-part question starting with a very simple definition of antiracist: identify and challenge racist policies. In this context, that is what is meant by antiracist. And then, please say if this course inspired you to be an anti-racist or not. All of the focus group participants answered affirmatively to this question, but with varying degrees of magnitude. They are arranged below, as best as can be perceived from this vantage point, in descending order of the extent to which their remarks seemed to affirm both propositions posed in this question.

In this sub-section, whole passages made by the focus group participants are preserved and presented as is, intact, without editorial commentary woven between their words, as has been the approach in the preceding chapters. To begin, Laine addressed the definitions of racist and antiracist before she shared a course-related epiphany, and then closed with a hypothetical example of personal antiracist practice she now considers.

Yeah, of course. I actually think it's funny that you made the distinction about what it means to be anti-racist because I think before I would've said... I think during the course there was a question I was like, "Do you identify as anti-racist?" And I was like, "Well, that's a dumb question. Obviously, I'm not racist." So, I just said yes. And I think now that I have more information on it and I understand it a little bit better, I would say before the course I wasn't racist, but I also wasn't anti-racist if that makes sense. I was just, "Whatever happens, happens. I don't need a whatever." But after taking the course and having the information

sit with me, it made me a little bit more curious to do more research on my own, look into things a little bit more. So I definitely think I'd be more willing to look into it and say like, "Oh, that's wrong. That shouldn't be that way." And if I have the opportunity to do something about it, of course I think I would take that now.

Ahmaud easily matched, if not exceeded, Laine's fervor on this topic when he followed her in the round. Apparently, he too was mentally sparked by the distinction drawn around "antiracist" and spent some time discussing it before bringing it home, literally. His testimony, although partially situated in the hypothetical realm, attested to some of the desired outcomes the Course in Anti-Black Racism was designed to pursue, namely: being (1) critically informed, and (2) motivated to justice-action. In the following excerpt, Ahmaud articulated his thoughts about the relationship of the ABRC to his personal antiracist motives.

Definitely, yeah. I think that, again, [you] mentioned the distinction of racism and being anti-racist. That distinction that makes me think of, oh my God, MLK talking about the most dangerous person in America is the white moderate or something like that, because they really have no share or care or skin in the game, where it's like, "All right, I'm not this. I'm not one or the other. So I'm just..." And complicit, basically, so you don't do anything about oppression and racism. So that's a great distinction to make. And definitely I would say, yeah, because I don't know... Let's take certain events that we had. I remember now, [it] just popped into my head now, when... I think it was the end of the semester when Darnell Moore [spoke], he talked about environmental racism in Camden. Talked about what was happening with the plants and how it was affecting Black health outcomes in the area. But knowing actually that being so close to me where I am. Camden is not super, super far from me, and I never even had heard about that. When you get examples of...

you feel empowered to just do more research and you see also just... It makes you almost upset in a sense, almost like... hopeless, like, "Oh my God, all these systems seem to be against me," for example. What can you do? But also knowledge is power, and it gives you that catalyst. Let me get out there and do something because one change, one grassroots change, it's something, it's contributing to a bigger systemic change, hopefully. So I definitely say it's helped me feel more anti-racist, this course.

Voting in public-governance elections ranks high in the pantheon of crucial political actions and individual *should* take, especially in the federal republic of the United States of America—a bloody and ugly experiment in so-called democracy. In the U.S.A., many politicians advocate policies that are considered racist and/or complicit with anti-Blackness. Therefore, to cast a vote against racist politicians is to act against racist policies, which by definition, is an antiracist action. This is where Briana focused her remarks concerning antiracism and how the ABRC was involved with her political evolution at a pivotal time in her “coming of age” in during the infamous election cycle of 2020. Remembering the times, Brianna recalled:

It did kind of inspire me to take a more active stance, especially with the 2020 election and everything that happened. I feel like that really, I mean, I was 18 when the 2020 election happened. So that was my first-time voting. So I feel like it put it into perspective like, "Okay, sure. The big elections are big, but start small, local." And I think that really motivated me to try and start small and do what I can with what I can. Because I feel like before, when I was younger, I kind of had a, I guess, pessimistic viewpoint. I just felt so overwhelmed with the way the world was and I feel like I couldn't really do anything. But I feel like this course and getting older helped me realize that I have to start small and do what I can.

Suzi, like Briana, led with activism and discussed community organizing, yet, it was more theoretical, less concrete, and she did not know how much credit to bestow on the Course in Anti-Black Racism for the few experiences she has had since the course because the timing of the ABRC overlapped with her moving away from home and being in college, and therefore having more freedom to be active. After explaining that in the interview, she said:

It definitely did push me to be more active in fighting racism. So I don't know exactly how much I attribute to the course, but I do think it definitely made me more eager to get involved, I would say. And if there's any community organizing or anything, it definitely made me feel more urgency, I would say, to really do something and be active, I would say, in being anti-racist rather than just knowing or having these opinions, but maybe like being a more passive supporter.

According to the picture Luke painted of his political life of recent years, he had a bit of a history in local activism. It appears that Luke ventured into the realm of public demonstrations and BLM solidarity (or allyship) during the international eruption of protests surrounding the devastating and infuriating police execution of [an unarmed] Mr. George Perry Floyd, Jr. on May 25, 2020. For students like Luke, the Course in Anti-Black Racism was like wanted nourishment rather than feeling force-fed. In the following passage, Luke explained the connection the course had to his already activated and budding antiracist practices. Offering his perspective, Luke said:

Yeah. I definitely have to go off of, I forget who said it, talking about acting locally, right? I think it definitely contributed to that because I think a lot of people started in May when everything went crazy. We were like, "This is going to be the time." And then you saw end of the fall, there was all this backlash, and it was like, "Okay, so this is going to be a lot more. We're going to be fighting this for a lot longer, so you have to act locally." And so I

definitely think it gave me fuel to continue and not necessarily burn out. Because I mean I've continued to be active with protesting this sort of stuff, but specifically locally stuff, not just reactive. To some extent reactive, but definitely I think it added fuel to that fire, I think, is how the course contributed to my fighting anti-racism.

Bella's input on this topic was concise and clear enough to make her point. Her first sentence is phrased in such a way that it may need to be read carefully to follow her meaning within the flow of her cadence and diction, but the final three sentences are more perspicuous. Essentially, Bella explained how being able to put words—justice vocabulary—to feelings translated into knowledge that encourages her towards antiracist actions. In Bella's words: "it enabled me more to identify racism and which I used to be able to see... I used to have just a feeling that's a little bit weird, but I couldn't pinpoint what it was all the time and then challenge. I definitely have more knowledge to challenge. And so, I feel it more enabled me to be anti-racist." Bella's remarks are reminiscent of themes in discussed in the findings for question 5f concerning being able to hold more informed conversations about race and racism; particularly the themes of *instructive vocabulary* and *greater confidence*, and the relationship they share.

Consistently throughout the focus group interview, Claire communicated her thoughts boldly, unabashedly, and without apology. The now-popular phrase: "sorry not sorry" might be in her clapback toolbox, on not. Yet the tone and meaning of the phrase is grasped when the experience of interviewing Claire was presented in one of the focus groups. In unequivocal and extremely concise terms, Claire candidly yet coolly clarified and contextualized—and depending on one's perspective, called out—a key challenge and unspoken/under-analyzed dynamic of the Course in Anti-Black Racism. "I mean," said Claire, "I did learn some additional strategies, but

still, I think I don't know if it was necessarily geared toward Black people, per se, as far as, trying to promote that antiracist behavior and everything.”

Were Claire’s remarks the data collecting equivalent of a *mic drop*? “If you *didn’t* know, now you know,” to borrow from Christopher Wallace (“The Notorious B.I.G.) that captures the emphasis of her revelation. To be sure, Claire was not alone her keen assessment. Both Ahmaud, and to a more substantive degree, Briana recognized and treated this dilemma. Still, Claire’s remarks create a flawless arch, boomeranging the conclusion of this section back to its beginning, where it was stated that students who self-identified as “Black” or African American often experienced the course in anti-Black racism differently than did their counterparts of other racial/ethnic identities. Claire made that point crystal clear.

In Conclusion , speaking with students in a focus group setting, provided, not only the space for them to flesh out the standardized survey scales and proverbial checked boxes with words all their own. It also offered the opportunity to field their perspectives on additional topics.

6.3 Section III: Keeping Critical Eyes on the Prize

Returning to a passage from Patel (2021) partially presented in chapter four, in which she made clear: “To reform, or more fundamentally revolutionize, the core purpose and intended audience of higher education, student pushback and protest has been crucial. For the most part,” Patel explained, “universities have only shifted their structural and cultural practices when students have demanded change to decenter whiteness and open opportunities for poor and subjugated communities (Patel, 2021, 134).

Responding to Ferguson’s (2012) critique of power and domination dynamics in universities, Patel (2021) summarized and highlighted one of his points: “[U]niversities co-opt student protest demands and then domesticate and dampen the revolutionary potential of

knowledges and cultures beyond the mainstream culture of individualism, competition, and achievement that relies on the façade of meritocracy.” In conclusion, Patel (2021) offered: “The purpose of co-opting a demand from students is to prop up the institution as munificent” (p. 136).

Patel (2021) described “containment” in this context, as “a way of fundamentally occupying the changes, such that they do not dismantle the order of power and the ordering of those who have power. From a settler colonial lens,” explained Patel, “this containment is in step with the pervasive and long-standing interest in containment as a form of power and domination” (p. 136). “Both moves, co-opting and containing,” said Patel, “are linked through the shared strategy of acquiescing to just enough people and curricular programs so as to maintain a larger stronghold on white settler power,” (Patel, 2021, p. 135). Ultimately, Patel keenly concluded: “...systemic racism requires constant, nimble confrontations that work for and toward decolonization, abolition, and freedom.” (Patel, 2021, 163).

I propose that Ms. Sydney Massenberg’s letter and petition are excellent and recent examples of those nimble confrontations Patel mentioned. Massenberg’s nimble confrontations set off a number of other nimble confrontations (as previously mentioned); and who knows what or who was inspired by those, and beyond. Was this a silver lining in the sad, smokey, mourning skies of the bloody and catastrophic season of “the double pandemic(s)”? Were the nightmares wrought by covid and wreaked by anti-Blackness being transformed and sublimated into the “freedom dreams” (Kelley, 2002) of African American and Afro-Diasporic students, alumni, and allies? Is this course what Sydney Massenberg and others freedom-dreamed? Is this why she created and circulated that powerful—and now legendary—petition that garnered over 5,300 signatures in a few days, and over 7,000 in total? Do the stated goals of the course stand up to and answer her call for transformative and widespread (read: university-wide) change? Is this what she

imagined in her inspired mind? Will this course live up to the legacy she intended for Pitt even though she would not be around to benefit from it since she had just graduated weeks before she conceived the petition? The interviews prompted by research question one (RQ-1) of this study created the opportunity for Massenberg and several others to answer these important questions.

As one of this nation's first required courses in higher education—specifically at a PWI—solely focused on deconstructing anti-Blackness through scholarly analysis informed by Black Studies and antiracist discourse, the ABRC, formally known as, PITT 0210: Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology & Resistance, presented an opportune case-study to gather data for this scholarly investigation. The findings of quantitative survey data (QTS), the open-ended response data, and the focus group data consistently revealed and suggested that the vast majority of students from the inaugural, 2020 cohort, agree that the core-curricula course, PITT 0210-Anti-Black Racism supported the cultivation of racial literacy and antiracist ethics, as these terms were defined in this study.

7.0 Chapter VII : Foundations, Aspirations, Implications, Conclusions

Towards Socially Responsible and Antiracist Education:

The ABRC and Racial Literacy in an Age of Anti-Blackness

“Today’s dissenters tell the complacent majority that the time has come when further evasion of social responsibility in a turbulent world will court disaster and death. America has not changed because so many think it need not change, but this is the illusion of the damned.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr., 1968

In the spirit of *sankofa*, I will revisit the past and retrieve what is needed to move forward in the present. In this instance, “the past” is the message from Dr. King in the epigraph, not long before he was assassinated in 1968. In this instance, the past is the social analysis of W.E.B. Du Bois presented in the next section. In this instance, the past is also the very beginning of this study which commenced in 2021, as well as the very first words of this document, the title—*Socially Responsible Education in an Age of Anti-Blackness: Core Curricula and Black Studies as Strategic Sites for Cultivating Racial Literacy and Antiracist Ethics*. A disaggregation of the title produces the following key concepts: *socially responsible education*, *anti-Blackness*, *core curricula*, *Black studies*, *strategic sites*, *cultivating*, *racial literacy*, and *antiracist ethics*. A reconfiguration of the subtitle forms the essential question with which this study is concerned: Can racial literacy and antiracist ethics be cultivated within schools through required coursework in Black Studies (including Ethnic Studies)? These key concepts represent the foundations and the essential

question frames the aspirations this study this study is building. In the following sections, I will discuss these foundations and aspirations in relationship to the ABRC (PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance), before addressing the implications of this study and making concluding remarks.

7.1 Socially Responsible Education (SRE)

My vision of “Socially Responsible Education” (SRE) includes educational policy, pedagogy, programming, leadership, and advocacy that is relevant, accountable, responsive, ethical, critical, active, sustaining, and eco-aware/environmentally engaged. These eight attributes create the acronym: rare case. Thus, when some educational phenomenon meets most, if not all, of these eight criteria, it is eligible to be deemed a “rare case” in education and qualify as an SRE. The university’s lightning-fast development and implementation of this large-scale effort to advance racial literacy through coursework in Black Studies and antiracist ethics qualifies as a rare case of SRE, in my estimation. PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance represents a powerful, organic, and local example of—or at least a momentous attempt at—socially responsible education.

In the chapter entitled “The ‘Negro Problem’ in the Age of Social Reform”—which coincidentally reminds me of the title of this study—Derrick Aldridge (2008) quotes Du Bois from his 1968 autobiography on the topic of race, racism, and the “Negro Problem”—as the pioneering sociologist coined it. Du Bois observed: “The world was thinking wrong about race, because it did not know. The ultimate evil was stupidity. The cure for it was knowledge based on scientific investigation” (p. 44). On the following page, Aldridge (2008) concludes: “Du Bois advocated educational strategies that were responsive to the social, economic, and political conditions of

Black people” and believed that “to understand a social problem, one has to take into account it’s historical and political contexts” (p. 45).

In all three of these statements concerning the educational thoughts of Du Bois, there is significant overlap with the concept of socially responsible education, as well as the ABRC, and why it came to be. Du Bois’ first point about stupidity/ignorance preceding or being at the root of racism and anti-Blackness is analogous to the thesis and discussion on social ill/literacy in chapter one of this dissertation. Furthermore, it champions the general notion of literacy as paramount, and the importance of increasing awareness/knowledge through scientific investigation. The notion that the “wrong” ways in which society thinks about race can be course-corrected through education is also shared proposition between Du Bois, the ABRC, and the thesis propelling this dissertation study.

In the second statement concerning educational strategies that are responsive to social realities, the very definition of socially responsible education is voiced in Aldridge’s (2008) description of Du Bois’ thinking on the role and place of public education. The similarities in these words and the ones I use to describe socially responsible education are, once again, coincidentally pronounced. According to Aldridge (2008) Du Bois agreed that public education should be socially responsible, which is to say responsive to the social realities of students.

On a related note, it may be important to make transparent an editorial note which informs the way I interpret the intellectual and rhetorical works of Du Bois, and for that matter, Carter G. Woodson, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other great African American thinkers who often addressed African Americans, or “Negroes” (in the parlance of their times) within the context of the white [settler-colonist] power structure of the U.S. I have noticed in many instances, such as this one, when Du Bois (or the aforementioned) prescribes solutions for African

Americans, the advice, especially when it is about the promise, potential, or virtues of education, is often simply good advice for most, if not all, “Americans”; and sound policy applicable to the nation as a whole. What is good for the canary, is good for the miners.

The “canary in the coalmine” trope is frequently invoked by scholars, including Guinier & Torres (2002), because it is so effective at demonstrating the proximity to and triangulated relationship between (1) harm/danger/existential threats—poisonous fumes in the coalmine; (2) African Americans (and other vulnerable populations in U.S. society)—the symbolic canary; and (3) white, settler-colonist society—the miner. It is a known fact that public existential threats, i.e. the COVID pandemic, impact the most vulnerable populations first; much like the way the lethal vapors in the mine choke the life out of the canaries, whose demise allows miners to take life-saving precautions.

In the third statement, which conveyed Du Bois’ belief that studying the historical and political contexts of a social problem was key and critical to understanding it, a clear through-line can be drawn between it and the systematic, pedagogical approach taken by the instructional team of the ABRC. Anti-Black racism is certainly a social problem. And as the course title indicates, studying the history, ideology and resistance to anti-Black racism is the way to understand it. In the very least, it is a well-informed, and academically—as well as socially—responsible proposition.

What is considered “responsible” and one’s “responsibility” is contextual and circumstantial, as well as influenced by cultural and/or religious/spiritual practices. As it is in larger society, discourse and debates on responsibility are tied up with many ethical considerations when public education, students/youth populations, and a fragile democratic republic hang in the balance. Thinking with Gunzenhauser (2013), I am one of the “us” he spoke for when he wrote:

“Consideration of multiple ethical theories causes us to align with the notion of “responsibility” as the key ethical concern of an educator and the profession as a whole, ... ” and that “cultivating those relations with responsibility should be [a] central project...” and a “central commitment” in matters related to public education, and teacher preparation (p. 200). As Gunzenhauser (2012) explained in an earlier text, within the realm of education, the “relations of responsibility are intrapersonal (the educators responsibility to self), relational (responsibilities towards proximal others), and public (responsibilities educators have towards all others)” (p. 8).

To be sure, socially responsible education can look different based on the context. In this instance, it intends and looks like: being socially aware or socially literate and responding to the social sphere (of the school-community) responsibly through educational resources (which include programming and wrap-around services). The evidence of socially responsible education is present and bountiful in the example provided by the ABRC, and subsequently in this case-study of how it came to be.

The social climate of the nation during the spring and summer of 2020 was one of extraordinary social unrest. The air was thick with fumes and smoke rising from smoldering piles of white supremacist symbols such as police vehicles burning at the sites of local uprisings. The skies were awash in the cries, wails, screams, chants, eulogies, apologies, queries, songs, and constantly flowing-constantly evaporating tears of the people doing the wake work (Sharpe, 2016). Beyond that, one of Pitt’s own—soon followed by several other students at the university—brought the issues right to the university’s top brass, special delivery. In both cases, the heads of the University of Pittsburgh did the responsible thing, made the responsible move of responding with care, concern, and a posture of receptivity and/or proactive engagement.

Within the context of socially responsible education, it is useful to return to what Douglass Horsford (2011) had to say about education leaders as firefighters. “Just as firefighters must be well trained and knowledgeable of the devastating force of fire before ever arriving at the scene, educational leaders must be well versed in what race is, how it came to be, and how it functions in schools and society” (p. 97). And with regard to racial literacy, it is imperative for educators to apprehend what Douglass Horsford (2011) describes as the “dynamic interplay of race, power, and privilege throughout every aspect of American life,” (2011, p. 97). If educational leaders met these standards, that would be a nod to, and an example of socially responsible education. If they do not, “If schools do not help us get race right,” warns Milner, “society will regress to times in history, such as slavery and the Holocaust” (2023, p. 137).

To be sure, I associate both of these phenomena—the creation of the course and the function/potential of the course—with racial literacy (RL) and what Guinier (2004) describes as “a racially literate mobilization within and across lines of race, class, and geography...” (p. 118). In this study, the ABRC represents [the potential or the vision of] a socially responsible and racially literate mobilization of educational resources and political capital across socioeconomic and geographic spaces.

7.2 Age of Anti-Blackness/Anti-Black Racism

In 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois argued and predicted that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colorline.” In the 2001 preface presented in the 2017 (25th anniversary) edition of the 1993 text, *Race Matters*, Cornel West bore witness that...

The unique combination of American terrorism—Jim Crow and lynching—as well as American barbarism—slave trade and slave labor— bears witness to the distinctive American assault on black humanity. This vicious ideology and practice of white

supremacy has left its indelible mark on all spheres of American life—from the prevailing crimes of Amerindian reservations to the discriminatory realities against Spanish-speaking Latinos to racial stereotypes against Asians...In this sense, the problem of the twenty-first century remains the problem of the colorline. (p. vii)

What is meant by the phrase, “age of anti-Blackness” can be explained in numerous ways; including the way West articulated it above, and especially in the first sentence addressing American terrorism. Another succinct explanation with a “straight-no-chaser” affect comes in the form of a quote from the rapper Chuck D. To achieve the intended inference and read of D’s remarks, I suggest substituting the word “Black” for the “n-word” when it appears after “anti-“. Chuck D explains: “The police system, the government, the law is an anti-nigger machine. We as a people have to be able to control our own education, economics, and enforcement. As long as the police have to come in our neighborhoods to protect and serve...[they’ll] treat us like niggers and they’re an anti-nigger machine.” By invoking the word “machine”, D is underscoring the systemic nature and systematic forms of anti-Blackness (racism, violence, suppression, and oppression). So called Black people, Black lives, and Black bodies have been policed since at least 1619. That timestamp would make the last 400+ years in the Americas, an age of anti-Blackness.

Scholarship in Black Studies and CRT supports the 400+ year proposition. “The struggle by Black people to obtain freedom, justice, and dignity is as old as this nation”, said Derrick Bell (1992, p. 363). The “age of anti-Blackness”—the era of whiteness—began precisely at the same moment “Blackness” and “Whiteness” were imagined, perceived, constructed, and activated—by people who identified themselves as “white”—and persists into the foreseeable future. This “hard-eyed view of racism as it is and our subordinate role in it”, is the Racial Realism “we must seek”

said, Bell (1992, p. 378). In sum, and all things considered, it becomes conspicuously legible that the “age of anti-Blackness” in the context of the Americas, is synonymous and contiguous with “modernity” (1400s – present).

In a chapter on antiblackness DiAngelo included in her 2018 text on white fragility, I landed on timely pop-culture reference to underscore and make more relevant the “age of anti-Blackness” theme. DiAngelo (2018) ends the chapter with an extensive discussion and deep critique of the popular and award-winning film, *The Blind Side* (2009) , starring Sandra Bullock. Despite the popularity of this film, I had not heard of it until two days before reading DiAngelo’s take on it. In a news segment which aired on NBC’s *Nightly News with Lester Holt* during the final week of April 2023, the reporter mentioned that *The Blind Side* was the number one, most rented DVD of all time on Netflix—which is sunsetting its DVD rental service after 25 years. I thought it odd that a film so popular was completely off of my radar, but I did not linger on it. Two days later, I came across DiAngelo’s (2018) thoughtful and blistering review of the film, which vividly exemplified the film’s usefulness as a model of modern-day anti-Blackness.

DiAngelo (2018) pointed out that, “Although the movie was popular with white audiences, many problematic racial narratives are reinscribed in the film. In fact, there are no black characters who do not reinforce negative racial stereotypes” (p. 96). After illustrating several instances that support the aforementioned critique, DiAngelo (2018) distilled the various forms of anti-Black messaging, imaging, and projecting she observed in *The Blind Side* into eight bullet points. Some of the more provocative ones included: “...Black adults are morally and criminally corrupt”; “Black neighborhoods are inherently dangerous and criminal”; “virtually all blacks are poor, incompetent, and unqualified for their jobs; they belong to gangs, are addicted to drugs, and are bad parents.” The fact that a movie with all of this anti-Black racism is also the most rented film

on DVD format in Netflix's history is telling. It is yelling, not whispering, that this is an era/age of anti-Blackness.

7.3 Core Curricula, Racial Literacy, and the ABRC

With regard to cultivating racial literacy classroom settings, Skerrett (2011) found that instructional approaches that were effective for/in teaching about racial literacy were practices that were “sustained and strategic” (p. 318). That is exactly the benefit of courses being a part of the core curricula—they are delivered in a strategic fashion over an extended period of time, inviting/encouraging and allowing for deeper, more complex, and repetitive engagement with the course materials. “If we are to promote democracy, justice, and academic integrity, and make schooling challenging and relevant for students, we need to figure out compelling and productive ways to include race and racism in our curricula” (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 18).

The University of Pittsburgh was not the first major or public university to offer a course in anti-Blackness or antiracism, yet it seemingly was the first to auto-enroll thousands of students into one, and to make it a required part of the core-curricula as a one-credit course needed to graduate from Pitt, starting with the entering (freshman) class of fall 2020. In taking this bold and, I argue, warranted, socially responsible stance, the University of Pittsburgh officially established PITT-0210 - Course in Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance as a part of its core curriculum.

For the record and any non-education readers, by definition, core curriculum is a “series or selection of courses deemed essential and that all students are required to complete before they can move on to the next level in their education or earn a diploma, typically including, but not limited to, various reading, writing, math, and science courses” (www.edglossary.org/core-curriculum/). According to the folks at the Great Schools Partnership, the organization responsible for the

Glossary of Education Reform (edglossary.org) from which these definitions are sourced: “The general educational purpose of a core curriculum is to ensure that all students take and complete courses that are considered to be academically and culturally essential—i.e., the courses that teach students the foundational knowledge and skills they will need in college, careers, and adult life.”

I included the latter because I noticed that the authors paid due respect to the rightful place of cultural knowledge and life skills in the core curricula—calling them “essential”. Two areas of social literacy and intelligence that are not guaranteed components of core curricula in every public school across the United States; not even close. Hence the need to promote social literacy, racial literacy, and socially responsible education through Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, Social Ethics, Social Justice education, and/or Antiracist pedagogies.

The following anecdote provides a startling example of the power of racial literacy cultivation through core curricula. Over 50 years ago, author and political activist, Claude Lightfoot, wrote about the anti-racist education he observed in the public education of the German Democratic Republic. Remarking on the progressive political awareness and thoughtful activity of the students along with the commonly expressed solidarity with Angela Davis he encountered throughout the country, Lightfoot (1972), in a conversation with the Deputy Minister of Education and members of his staff, asked: “What kind of education are you conducting that brings out the marvelous qualities displayed by these children?” (p. 137). They replied, “Their curriculum from the kindergarten to the university carried messages about Black America” (p. 138). After taking the opportunity to examine textbooks for “all levels”, Lightfoot wrote, “Never have I seen the problems of Black America integrated into a general school system as I saw them there. Like a flash of lightening, or the light of bulb ignited, Lightfoot (1972) saw the light of what [the future

of] public education in the U.S. could be and claimed it. “Here,” he declared, “is an example that in my country can and must be emulated” (p. 138).

7.4 Black Studies, Racial Literacy, and the ABRC

In his study on pre-service teachers’ experiences teaching about race through Black history, LaGarrett King presented four reasons why “Black history is useful for exploring racial literacy.” According to King (2016, p. 1305), “Black history is...

1. Useful for understanding US racism.
2. One of the most popular US historical categories in K-12 education.
3. A case study in racial literacy when considering its “dual construction that renders race both visible and invisible in the K-12 context.”
4. Originally intended to serve as a counter hegemonic discourse to racist histories (Dagbovie, 2010).

Focusing on the first and fourth reasons King (2016) provided, the intelligence and appropriateness in the choice/move to ideologically anchor the ABRC in the scholarly waters of Africana Studies at the University of Pittsburgh are apparent. “The key element to racially literate teaching is to understand the racialization process of historical groups” explained King (2016, p. 1306). “This means,” he continued, “that within a racial state such as the US, all historical situated bodies are embedded in race and racism. All histories, therefore, even those considered to be white, when taught critically, using race as diagnosis, can be vehicles for racial literate teaching” (p. 1306).

PITT 0210 - Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance was a university course, existing independently of any particular academic department or school with the University of Pittsburgh. However, broadly speaking, it was anchored, informed, and led by Black Studies.

At Pitt, scholarship and coursework in Black Studies is situated within the Department of Africana Studies. The Provost—with her purview over university courses—pinpointed and asked the chairperson of the Africana Studies Department, Dr. Covington-Ward to lead and supervise the development of the course content for the ABRC. Thirteen of the 16 modules developed for the ABRC’s semester-long experience were presented by professors from several schools and departments across the University of Pittsburgh; delivering “mini-lectures” on a topic of their expertise. Yet, due to the topic of the course, all of the professors drew on scholarship associated with, if not advanced by, Black Studies. (See Appendix E for a look at the course syllabus for AY 2020 – 21.)

To say that Black Studies is a natural, fitting, or appropriate discipline and field to anchor and guide the ABRC or any course in anti-Blackness is more than what might seem to some as stating the obvious. Returning to the words of Dolores P. Aldridge (1994) from the aptly named, *Leadership for Diversity: the role of African American studies in a multicultural world*, within the context of this point is instructive. The professor of African American Studies explained that civil rights movement was the “most prominent movement for diversity” in modern times (p. 1); and, Black studies, as “the intellectual and scholastic offshoot of that movement, initiated the first wide scale effort to broaden social perspectives within the University” (p. 1). This legacy “uniquely positioned” African American studies “to address the diversity issue in America, and by extension” the world (p. 3). As Aldridge explained, “The African American experience from slavery, to emancipation, through Jim Crow oppression, civil rights, black nationalism, and all its other economic and political expressions, has clear application to national struggles waged by oppressed peoples elsewhere.” As Dr. James Cone used to say when discussing “ontological Blackness”, on

some level, any group of people oppressed by whiteness are “Black.” Blackness, in the context of whiteness is always already a designated space for all non-white people.

Although Aldridge was writing this in the mid 90s, her words seem as if they could have been written yesterday. She wrote, “Campuses are being compelled to re-evaluate race relations in a context of accelerating diversity. African American studies can assume a leading role in that process, providing the grounding and racial realities everyone needs to be considered a truly educated American” (p. 10). This is what happened at Pitt with the Africana Studies Department and PITT 0210, the course in anti-Black racism. Aldridge explains, “With an appropriate level of resource support, and status confirmation, African American studies can address issues of racial and cultural diversity in ways that can serve as a model for other disciplines” (p. 10). We also witnessed this aspect transpire with the ABRC scenario and the issue of funding and which academic department was asked to lead the course development. When Black Studies “has the platform to address issues of racism and oppression directly,” said Aldridge, it is certainly capable of doing so with its unique vantage point and “from the perspective of its historical victims, within the belly of the beast” (p. 10). Aldridge added:

In order to grasp the depth of America’s racial dilemma, African American studies exemplifies a clear, practical, emphatic course of action: infusing all curricula from K-12 to the University with diverse knowledge representing the different perspectives, experiences, and issues facing black and oppressed people in the world, African American studies has the potential to correct this discrepancy between what is formally taught and what is intuitively known to be true. (p. 10)

I wonder now what was brewing in 1992 and 93 when Aldridge was writing this that made her thoughts sound so in tune what is happen thirty years later in 2023. Aldridge (1994) concludes:

“As racial tension, hostility and conflict experience a resurgence on campus and throughout the larger society, an opportunity exists for African-American studies to recapture its pioneering role in diversity leadership” (p. 11). Thinking with L. King, I want to underscore that while Black Studies is used as the analytic for anti-racist education in this particular case/research study, other racialized/ethnic histories are appropriate for racial literate teaching (L. King, 2016).

7.5 Strategic Sites for Cultivating...

In many human societies, education is a primary method of socializing people/the populace/the public (Dewey, 1916; Durkheim, 1956; Mann, 1847). Schools are one of the main institutions that perform the work of educating and socializing humans towards their potential of social being (Arthur & Davison, 2000; Patel, 2016; Rand, 2020). In other words, schools expose, facilitate, and provide direction to human beings on how to be social in a society (organized social environment). Following this logic, schools are, can, or should be strategic sites of learning—cultivating knowledge and literacies. On a micro-level, a classroom, course, and/or a curriculum can be a site for learning that is utilized strategically. The story and successes of the ABRC exemplify the wisdom and discernment of utilizing Black Studies and the core curriculum as strategic sites for cultivating racial literacy and antiracist ethics. Black Studies is rooted in racial literacy, in the broadest sense of the term. Likewise, Black Studies has been conceptualizing and promoting antiracist ethics since before “antiracist” was a thing, or added to the standard American English lexicon. Therefore, Black Studies is a most fitting and certainly strategic site for cultivating racial literacy and antiracist ethics. While the core curriculum is a strategic site because that high priority placement for a course within the schools required course of study ensures that the vast majority of students can be at least exposed to, if not nurtured and bettered by it.

I believe schools and public education have the power to dehumanize, democratize, or decolonize people, and transform societies for better or for worse. Public schools are strategic sites for us/society to use responsibly in a deliberate effort to cultivate and co-create racially just, socially equitable, and eco-friendly systems, structures, societies, and futures that are free from oppression, for all to inhabit, inherit, and flourish.

7.6 Racial Literacy and the ABRC

To return once more to the cornerstone of our foundation and framework of our aspirations: racial literacy. Racial literacy is a theoretical framework and provides such a theoretical foundation for students and educators. “Understanding theory is critical to creating deeper conversations in the classroom. In order to make sense of the world,” explained Bolgatz (2005), “students need to be able to articulate what they see” (p. 35). “When we talk about race and racism, we need a theoretical foundation. Students should understand that race is a social and historical construction and that racism is multifaceted (personal as well as political and historical as well as current),” explained Bolgatz (2005, p. 35). In my assessment, this is what the ABRC was designed and intended to do for students of the course’s digitally interactive lessons.

For the purposes of this study, the capacity for cultivating racial literacy in students is reflected in the evidence this study gathered, interpreted, and measured in ways that were specifically and literally matched to and compatible with the stipulated objectives of the course in anti-Black racism, PITT 0210. As it stated in the introductory letter for the course: “The overall goals for the course are for [students] to be able to understand the history of anti-Black racism, acquire the knowledge to be able to recognize and challenge racist policies and practices, and to develop strategies to be anti-racist in everyday life.” Thus, racial literacy in this context is understood as the learned/acquired capacity/literacy to/ (1) understand anti-Black racism

(historical and current contexts), (2) identify (and respond to) racist policies and practices, and (3) develop (intra-and inter-) personal antiracist sensibilities.

If the data presented here is to be taken seriously, then the ABRC seems to have helped most students meet these intellectual benchmarks. Furthermore, these criteria profoundly overlap with definitions of racial literacy set forth by Guinier and other scholars of RL in education research. PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: history, ideology, and resistance certainly meets the marks of a “racial literacy course”, “racially literate course”, and “racial literacy effort” when compared to core components of Guinierian racial literacy that define RL as dynamic process that expands human comprehension of the ways in which race, racism, racialized violence and systemic racism function in western civilization and under whiteness by highlighting, emphasizing and “redefining (1) racism as a structural problem rather than a purely individual one” (Guinier, 2003, p. 202); (2) “race as an instrument of social, geographic, and economic control of both whites and blacks” (2004, p. 114); and (3) “race in the [U.S. as] a by-product of economic conflict that has been converted into a tool of division and distraction (2004, p. 99).

In Bolgatz’ (2005) assessment, racial literacy is interactive, multi-sensory, and either demands, invokes, or invites a care ethos in students, and/or ethic of caring in educators, as Noddings (1988) would say; yet “played out in a culturally responsive form [like] in the work of Valenzuela (1999), with sympathetic attentiveness...” as Gunzenhauser (2015, p. 5) explained it. How do we invoke or invite sense of societal, humanitarian, and ecological care in students that translate into observable change? Inspiring an ethos of care is a crucial part of the racial literacy and antiracist paradigm. Bolgatz (2005) explained, “Racial literacy requires that students engage in interactions intellectually and emotionally. Students have to care about how race and racism affect them. They have to understand why they should pay attention and work for social change”

(p. 35). Paying close, careful attention and engaging in efforts to improve situations involving racialized others and racial justice antiracist ethics are the aims of antiracist ethics. In fact, racial literacy advances what would be denoted in today's idiom, an explicitly antiracist position: "In order to change the way race is understood," explained Guinier, "race has to be directly addressed rather than ignored" (2003, p. 207). Addressing racism is an antiracist action.

7.7 Antiracist Ethics, Ethical Awareness, and the ABRC

By antiracist ethics, I am speaking to and about ethical sensibilities that are antiracist. In succinct terms, ethics relate to human senses of care and/or concern about what is good, right, fair, and just; especially in terms of making decisions or choices that impact the self and others. Antiracist, as it was presented and defined in chapter one, describes the action of "supporting an antiracist policy or expressing an antiracist idea", (Kendi, 2019, p.). Therefore, in the simplest form, what I mean by antiracist ethics are sensibilities—feelings, discernment, insights, awareness, empathy, appreciation, responsiveness—that challenge, oppose, critique, and/or change racist ideas, actions, policies, programs, and people. Cultivating antiracist ethics, requires antiracist education, and antiracist education is a component of racial literacy.

"In addition to the moral imperative, race and racism should be included in students' coursework because these topics are part of the academic curriculum", wrote Bolgatz (2005, p. 7). "Students deserve accurate information in their courses of study. Race and racism are central aspects of history, literature, and science", she explained (p. 7). Bolgatz (2005) analysis corresponds with the focus group findings discussed in chapter six. According to the student's accounts, factual data presented in the ABRC provided them with clarity, which stimulated confidence. And confidence *encourages* courageous thoughts and actions. Being antiracist is about [taking] action. It emphasizes social activism (Husband, 2016). Rogers and Mosley (2006)

concluded: “literacy education in schools must address race, racism, and anti-racism...to prepare students to participate in U.S. democracy” (p. 465)

With regard to why antiracist ethics are important in education and to society, Bolgatz (2005) offered a fitting word. “Students need to learn to be citizens active in constructing and maintaining a society that accords everyone equal rights. To do so, they need to know how to challenge racism and to believe that they can do so” (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 18). Indeed, this is what racial literacy and social literacy are about encouraging and facilitating.

7.7.1 Ethical Awareness

Ethical awareness is a particular discourse within the philosophy of ethics that I was introduced to through/during the literature review process of/for this study. In an article addressing the emotional labor/realities that are involved and invoked during the processes of engaging in racial literacy cultivation, Winans (2015) argued for the serious consideration, if not prioritizing, of ethical awareness as a model/way to think about and think through ethicality.

Following Micciche’s (2005) scholarship, Winans (2015) explained that ethical awareness places emphasis on the “value of understanding ‘the situated nature of ethics’ and its capacity to question what counts as right and good in shifting political, cultural, and institutional contexts” (Micciche quoted in Winans, 2015, p. 480). This, and the careful attention it pays to *difference*, is what distinguishes ethical awareness from traditional models of ethics that prioritize universalist notions over by relativist ones situated in time and space (Winans, 2015). Those adopting a stance of ethical awareness perceive ethics “as a contingent set of practices that are always in process, localized, and based on principles of difference” (Micciche quoted in Winans, 2015, p. 480). On this note, Guinier (2003) reminds us , “Racial literacy has a process dimension that uses race to guide participatory problem solving and accountability” (p. 207).

With regard to conceptualizing racial literacy through a lens of ethical awareness, Winans (2015) advised that it “entails cultivating ongoing questioning and hence the exploration of alternative ways of being and acting in the world; however, this approach does not presume to script those alternatives for students or to define certain moral and racial identities as ideal” (p. 481). Winans argues that the goal of racial literacy education should not be specifically about “changing students’ actions or racial identities in a particular way. Rather, [it should be about] trying to cultivate ongoing questioning about the familiar, the comfortable, and the “acceptable” (p. 480).

It is no secret that “schools and communities throughout the United States are very racially segregated. Most of our students, therefore, have little contact with people of different races”, noted, Bolgatz (2005, p. 17). “Without forces or experiences intervening to mitigate their ignorance about different races, students can easily perpetuate stereotypes and myths and harden racial divisions”, warned Bolgatz (2005, p. 17). Racial literacy can be that force. “No matter how they identify themselves racially, students benefit from understanding how racism affects them and how they participate in racism, even by their silence” (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 17-18). And silence is a major ethical concern and is antithetical to antiracist ethics. “Racial literacy counters the mystification, and silence...” (Brown, Kelada & Jones, 2020, p. 18).

7.8 Implications

Historically racialized societies throughout the colonized world, such as the U.S., are in need of innovative efforts in educational leadership, policymaking, curriculum, and instruction aimed at activating and utilizing schools as sites for cultivating racial literacy and/or antiracist awareness in their students. It is a hopeful intention that bringing the ABRC into focus and amplifying the benefits of antiracist education and courses such as PITT 0210-Anti-Black Racism:

history, ideology, and resistance will encourage interest, investment, and the proliferation of racial literacy cultivation and what I call *socially responsible education*. In our assessment, prioritizing the systematic and sustainable implementation of antiracist, social justice, and/or Black/Ethnic Studies into the core curricula of all public schools (P-16) is a relevant, responsive, equitable and socially responsible intervention to adopt in the U.S.

7.8.1 RL, Policy, Coursework, Instruction, and Achievement Gaps

When cultivating racial literacy in students (and the adults/educators who attend to their development) shows up like the ABRC—Pitt’s course in anti-Black racism—or similar types of formally structured coursework in Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, and/or Social Problems, it carries the promise and potential of implications for all levels of formative and formal education. Although this study is decidedly not focused on PK-12 education, its findings can inform work and research in these spaces as well. Additionally, it is also telling to note that most of the scholarly literature on racial literacy in education is focused on secondary and primary education (see chapter 2), thus establishing the relationship and relevance of racial literacy cultivation to PK-12 education research and praxis.

7.8.1.1 Closing the Gap with Racial Literacy

Many education scholars are concerned with what is commonly referred to as the “achievement gap” and developing, advancing, exploring, and experimenting with ideas, strategies, and myriad reform measures focused on “how to close it.” One of those scholars is Jerome Taylor, whose work in the last two decades investigates disparities in academic performance, disciplinary actions, and well-being between racially minoritized students and their “white” counterparts, and consistently introduces strategies and proposes interventions to redress

and alleviate the gaps. A number of the studies he has led in the K-12 field illuminate the implications of cultivating [forms of] racial literacy in students and educators.

In a mid-2021 paper published through his nonprofit organization, Center for Family Excellence, Taylor and a team of nine co-authors drew on amalgamated results from a series of studies (issued by researchers at Stanford, Harvard, and other universities) which measured indicators of implicit racial bias in individuals to describe the thoroughly racialized and anti-Black perceptions of U.S. Americans. Taylor et al. (2021) report that:

based on millions of participants... nearly 80 percent of White and almost 50 percent of Black adults identify with pro-White and anti-Black attitudes (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010; Banaji & Greenwald, 2013)—even among those who self-identified themselves as political activists or bias free. (p. 1)

To emphasize how stagnate, stubborn, and circuitous racism has been in U.S. society, the co-authors note that “these proportions are not far removed from pro-White and anti-Black attitudes re-reported in doll studies of Black and White children during the late ‘30s in America (Beale-Spencer, 2010, 1939)” (Taylor et al. p. 1).

Contextualizing this catastrophic reality, Taylor and Biggs (2021) highlighted one of the major contributors to relentless anti-Black racism in the U.S. Out of the six recommendations the authors prescribed for “closing and reversing racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps” (p. 1), number five is: “Dilute Cultural Toxins” (p. 4). They identified the culprit as “cultural toxins” which have been actively poisoning the perspectives of the nation’s population for “more than 400 years of racial animus toward Blacks in America (1619-2020)” (pp. 3-4). Echoing the findings mentioned in Taylor et al. (2021) about the published studies which revealed “nearly 80 percent of Whites and almost 50 percent of Blacks consciously or unselfconsciously identify with racist

stereotypes” (p. 1), Taylor and Biggs (2021) provided more specificity about said stereotypes. The authors described the fabrications as beliefs that “Blacks” are “mentally, intellectually, morally and emotionally” inferior; yet “physically, athletically, sexually, and rhythmically” superior. “This racial animus” Taylor and Biggs claimed, “afflicts the majority of America’s population and undermines the [widespread attainment] of justice” (p. 4).

In the Taylor et al. (2021) paper, the team of authors proposed a framework for a three-pronged intervention dubbed: “HOW.” The first step, H, called for “diminishing the four levels of implicit and explicit racist stereotypes.” The goal of the second stage, O, is to “diminish the nine types of racial discrimination.” Accomplishing steps one and two, the H and the O, “will establish a systemic climate which welcomes W,” the team of education scholars and practitioners concluded (p. 12). Returning to where this section began, the W represents the goal of “accelerating the closure of racial achievement gaps in reading and math.” Extinguishing the four levels of racist stereotypes and nine types of racial discrimination Taylor et al. (2021) discuss is a crucial objective in the remedy they prescribed for “closing the achievement gap”. Based on data from “nearly 200 schools across the nation” and “in public school districts large and small” the authors are clear that “without H and W, sustainable drives toward Justice (Outcome Equity) and Freedom (Fair Access to the nation’s fountains of opportunity) are improbable if not impossible” (p. 12). To be sure, “We have documented this travesty of Justice and Freedom,” said Taylor et al., “in locations North and South and East and West” (p. 12).

Ultimately, Taylor et al. (2021) call for measures that are not unlike the measures that instituted the ABRC. The authors claimed, “we are vigorous supporters of policies and practices that diminish implicit bias and racial discrimination as together they enable deployment of policies and practices that ongoingly normalize the achievement of Justice and Freedom” (p. #). It is clear

to me that PITT 0210 – Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance is a solid case and point of such a policy, practice, and course that seeks to “diminish implicit racial bias” and various forms of “racial discrimination.” Thus, the logic follows, that if addressing and resolving racist ideologies, policies, and activities has a positive influence on “closing the achievement gap” as Taylor has proposed in numerous publications; then, the ABRC and coursework like it, can positively influence the narrowing of education-related disparities sustained by “Black” and racially minoritized students in the U.S.

7.8.1.2 Racial Literacy in Education Policy

Waiting for education policy(-makers) in the U.S. to catch up, or rather *step up*, to the racial literacy levels of the policy(-makers) in other racially diverse, industrialized, nations is like waiting for Godot (Beckett, 1953). “Unlike any nation in Europe,” said Toni Morrison, “the United States holds whiteness as the unifying force. Here, for many people, the definition of ‘Americanness’ is color” (p. 128, 2017). This whiteness inadvertently fomented a pool of social paralysis and racial illiteracy that retards potential progress, debilitates democratic processes, and endangers the futures of an increasingly more racially and ethnically diverse “American” society. As a result, K-16 public education in the U.S. is several decades behind its counterparts in terms of racial literacy.

Exactly 20 years ago, lawmakers in Brazil passed a national law to establish “compulsory teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian culture into primary and secondary schools’ curriculum as a way to foster anti-racism and racial literacy in Brazil”, (Canen, 2010, p. 550). Compare this to the state of Florida’s politicized rejection of the College Board’s Advanced Placement African American Studies course (Heyward, 2023) on the eve of Black History Month in 2023. While in a 2003 Brazil, the federal government of Brazil passed Law N.10639/2003 which “changed the original law that established the directives and bases for national education so as to include in the

official curricula of national schools the compulsory teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture”, explained Canen (2010, p. 550). To be sure, “Article 26-A” stipulates that “the idea is to study the history of Africa and of African people, as well as the fight of Blacks in Brazil, the black Brazilian culture and the role of the Black in the formation of national society, recognizing the contribution of Black people in social, economic, and political areas” in Brazil’s history (p. 551). Additionally, Canen (2010) clarified that “Article 79-B” of the new law established a new national holiday: “The National Day of Black Awareness” to be celebrated on November 20—the day Zumbi of Palmares, “a Black Brazilian hero who fought against slavery”, deceased. These educational policies, like the ones governing the course in anti-Black racism (PITT 0210) seek to “foster anti-racism and racial literacy” among their respective constituents. This is model for other universities and municipalities as well as an implication for future societal ideation.

7.8.1.3 Racial Literacy Coursework and Instruction

This curriculum evolution (adaptation, modification, and advancement) can be in the form of stand-alone courses or coursework integrated into extant courses in social studies, civics, U.S. history, world history, European history, English, literature, government, math, science, art, music, philosophy, foreign language, statistics, and any other subject in which race and/or culture are explicitly discussed or implicitly normalized. Racial literacy coursework refers to a wide variety subject matter, disciplines, modalities, and educational opportunities. There are numerous ways to advance the cultivation and acquisition of racial literacy through coursework.

To be sure, other scholars have said it. Yet, Winans (2015) worded this clarion call to educators of our times and annunciated the point in ways worth repeating. “Instructors should seek to cultivate students’ racial literacy, the ability to examine critically and recursively the ways in which race informs discourses, culture, institutions, belief systems, interpretive frameworks and

numerous facets of daily life” (p. 476). Ultimately, Winans (2015) reminds us of a very important point to keep central in our analysis of racial literacy. Invoking Guinier’s (2004) description of racial literacy as an “interactive process” (p. 115), and one that prioritizes “learning rather than knowing” (p. 15), Winans (2015) advised: “Given the varied ways that race and racism operate within and across time, it is also essential that we understand racial literacy as a process as opposed to equating it with a particular body of knowledge” (p. 477).

“First, we must consider the importance and implication of understanding racial literacy as a process as opposed to identifying it as a stable knowledge base or a skill that will necessarily bring about certain antiracist actions on the part of students” The overall point is strong but the pivotal words are “stable” and “necessarily”. Which is to say, racial literacy is a knowledge base, yet a dynamic one rather than stable. Likewise, racial literacy is a skill, yet not one that automatically translates into anti-racist actions. “Second,” Winans (2015) continued, “we need to understand that when we bring the subject of race and racism into our classrooms, we are establishing a context in which students will be implicitly and explicitly struggling with difficult ethical questions as they grapple with growing awareness of racial inequalities and their relationship to them” (p. 478). The third point stressed by Winans reminds educators “to recognize that when students engage with ethical questions they are also engaging with strong emotions that motivate and inform the process of questioning” (Winans, 2015, p. 478).

These ideas expressed by Winans (2015) complement those articulated by Bolgatz’ (2005) when she wrote: “Formally and informally, we can weave questions about race and racism into our content areas” (p. 114). Bolgatz understood that educators would have to consider both of those approaches because, as she stated: “Many of us are in educational systems where traditional content coverage is emphasized. Others are in schools and communities where

the politics of antiracist education are extraordinarily contentious” (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 115).

Depending on the details of the ecosystem in which the educator, school, and community are operating would inform the approach the educator would pursue. Regardless of the extenuating circumstances educators face, Bolgatz made it clear that teacher agency—intention and will-power—is still a required variable in the equation when she reminded and encouraged educators: “Fired up, we can help our students develop their racial literacy” (p. 115).

7.8.2 Racial Literacy and Decolonization

Racial literacy education has implications on the work settler decolonization. A rich example of what that looks like is provided by a 12-week course explicitly dedicated to cultivating racial literacy entitled: “Racial Literacy: Indigeneity and Whiteness”, developed Kelada and Jones in 2010 (Brown, Kelada, & Jones, 2020). It is described as a second-year course taught within an Indigenous Studies programme intended to aide students explore and examine concepts and constructions of race, Indigeneity, and whiteness in relationship to power (p. 8). . “The purpose of promoting and bringing racial literacy to Australian classrooms,” explain Brown, et al. (2020) “is to counter the exclusionary effects of racism and to emphasise the positive potential of a multilayered conceptual framework connecting the psychological, interpersonal, and structural dimensions of race” (p. 2). The authors found that “racial literacy is a subject that attempts to create a shift for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students” and the course was associated with “practical gains for each student” that participated.

Writing about racial literacy from the field of postcolonial scholarship, Brown et al. (2020) expose Australia as a society desperately in need of racially literate educational policies due to its catastrophic histories with genocide, alongside current conditions in which 84% of the nation’s population “feel that racial prejudice is a problem and 85% agree that something should be done

to minimise and fight racism,” according to national survey data collected over 10 years (p. 1). This course is a major mobilization to address the “gap in education on the subject of race and Indigenous issues” which deprives students in Australia of the “information and skills to understand the origins of rac[ism]” and “how it functions within the particularities of the Australian invader/settler colonial nation state” (p. 2).

7.8.3 Racial Literacy and Social Literacy

Racial literacy is a 21st century social skill, American (U.S.) survival skill, and critical framework rooted in a praxis of apprehending (perceiving), analyzing (examining), anticipating (tracking and calculating), and abolishing (preventing/dismantling/resolving) the presence, forms, functions, effects, and violence of race and racism. Humans are social beings (Aristotle, 328 B.C.E.; Aronson, 1972/2018; Krieger, 2005). Societies are comprised of humans (Rousseau 1762/1967; Simmel 1910). Therefore, societies are inherently social environments. The words “social” and “society” both derive from the Latin *socialis* meaning ‘allied,’ from *socius*, meaning ‘friend’. Thus, to be social and in a society is to be in alliance or with friends and/or companions. Considering the fundamental nature of human existence in a society or social environment, it is plausible, if not perceptible and certain, that social literacy (Arthur & Davison, 2000; Ghafouri & Wien, 2005; Rand, 2020; Street, 1995) is as relevant as alphanumeric literacy. Furthermore, in a society where race and racism are prevalent, racial literacy (Brown, 2011; Guinier, 2002, 2003, 2004; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011; Stevenson, 2014; Twine, 2003, 2004) is by default a type of social literacy.

7.8.4 Racial Literacy and Social Studies

According to scholars, two questions that are central to social studies are: *Who is human?* and *What does it mean to be humane?* (Barton & Levstik, 2013; King, 2016) If indeed, these are

key questions within the common inquiry of social studies discourse, it is a nod to the notions that 1) humans are indeed social beings; 2) the terms human beings and social beings—or social animals as Aronson (1972) prefers to say—are synonymous terms (within context); and 3) social studies is a study of human [beings in] society. Therefore, if to be a human being is to be a social being, then social literacy is core to being [a] human and humane in society. Likewise, if racial literacy is a type of social literacy, then racial literacy is core to being humane in a racialized society. If these suppositions are valid, they would not only support but partially explain the assertion of LaGarrett King (2016) that “social studies might be the most appropriate subject for explorations of racial literacy because of tis humanistic mission” (p. 1304).

7.8.5 Racial Literacy and Ethnic Studies

This appeal for increasing forms of social and racial literacy, joins and echoes thousands of voices around this nation, resounding from Indigenous American communities, Mexican [-American] communities, Chicano communities, Latiné communities, Asian American communities, Pacific Islander communities, and African American communities, who have been calling for elective and/or required courses/coursework in Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Native American Studies, and/or Chicano/Mexican American Studies to become policy mandates in the schools and universities they or their children attend, support, fund, graduated from or are in relation to due to biographic, geographic, or economic factors. The main difference between this cry, and the wails arising from specific communities who are oppressed by whiteness and defined and/or identified by racial markers, ethnic lineages, and cultural customs, is that this cry transcends and simultaneously includes all distinctions of race, ethnicity, and culture. Which is to say: racial literacy is not limited to or by race or ethnicity. Racial literacy has the capacity to critically engage

(examine, analyze, theorize, respond to) issues of racism and race, which are often conflated with, and sometimes inextricable from, ethnicity.

Following Sleeter's (2011) definition, L. King (2016) describes Ethnic studies as "teach[ing] critical US history that centers ethnic groups as the historical interpreters, examines the history and contemporary transgressions of US colonialism and racism, exposes ethnic group agency in combating oppression, and investigates communal identities and creativities" (p. 1315). King (2016) added, "Therefore, the importance of these subjects not only enhances content knowledge, but also provides a sophisticated racial literacy that heightens recognition of historically marginalized groups that maybe helpful for being more culturally relevant to students of color (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015)" (King, 2016, p. 1315).

Racial literacy is capacious enough to hold a dialogical and dialectical space for those who benefit from racial oppression [or have the potential to] in addition to those who suffer from oppression (Brown, 2011; Guinier, 2004; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011, 2014). If prepared and presented in ways that point to its potential, racial literacy can partially encompass and selectively—in contrast to comprehensively—address some of the core topics and concerns considered crucial and germane to Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Chicano/Mexican-American Studies, AAPI Studies, and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS). There are ways in which racial literacy can be of "service" to people of European-American (white) descent as it is to people of/in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2020; Guinier, 2004; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011, 2014).

7.8.6 Racial Literacy, Civics Education, and Scholactivism

"Public education became a battlefield rather than a constructive gravitational force within communities", said Guinier (2004), speaking about a post-Brown vs. Board national landscape. Little could she know that her description of a 1950s 'America' would be an exceptionally fitting

description of a 2020s ‘America’. What is to be thought of the state of public education in the U.S.A. when public school students are driven to file lawsuits against their state governments in order to receive basic civic education (Walsh, 2022)?

In 2018, a group of 14 students in Rhode Island filed a lawsuit—“that was also a proposed class action on behalf of all public-school students in Rhode Island”—alleging that “state officials have failed to provide students with a meaningful opportunity to obtain an adequate education to prepare them to be capable citizens” due to the absence of civics coursework in certain districts (Walsh, 2022). In 2020, the case was dismissed by a U.S. District Judge who remarkably admitted that the case represented “a cry for help from a generation of young people who are destined to inherit a country which we—the generation currently in charge—are not stewarding well” (Walsh, 2020). In 2022, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals, 1st Circuit, upheld the decision of the lower court, while acknowledging in their decision, “The students have called attention to critical issues of declining civic engagement and inadequate preparation for participation in civic life at a time when many are concerned about the future of American democracy” (Walsh, 2022).

In 2020, “in a case alleging deficiencies in the Detroit school system, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, in Cincinnati, recognized a federal right to a basic minimum education guaranteeing access to literacy” reported Walsh (2022). “But the lawsuit soon settled, and the [full 6th Circuit court vacated](#) the panel decision, effectively wiping it off the books”, Walsh (2022) added without any further explanation. As a law professor, legal scholar, and former counsel for the NAACP-LDF, Guinier’s analysis of *A.C v. McKee* in Rhode Island and *Gary B. v. Whitmer* in Michigan would be especially keen and instructive.

In a very recent example of racially literate scholactivism and mobilization, “As of January 2023, more than 8,500 educators had pledged to teach history honestly via the Zinn Education

Project as a measure to pushback against the CRT-bans and “anti-woke” legislation. which compiles teaching materials, news, and campaigns” (Kelly et al., 2023, p. 24). This mobilization and legal actions taken by the students in the court cases described above, exemplify kinds of racially literate scholactivism is needed right now and emphasize the truth: “Educators can and must collaborate to resist and push for the repeal of these policies” (p. 24) .

7.9 In Conclusion

Indeed, the year is 2023 in the United States of America. Rumors of race wars rage as racialized riots are waged, government takeovers are staged, and book pages hail the age of “white fear” (Martin, 2022), “white fragility” (DiAngelo, 2018), and “white rage” (Anderson, 2017). The last seven years of contemporary U.S. history have witnessed a glaring uptick in tactical, political, and inimical assaults on student access to information, curricula, pedagogy, personnel, resources, and programs related to cultivating/advancing racial literacy in public schools. In some GOP-led, [politically] conservative, and right-wing leaning districts and states across the nation, public schools are no longer preserved spaces that allow, let alone encourage, educators and students to investigate historically accurate, socially relevant, and diverse forms of scientific and cultural knowledge. If these socially and racially illiterate, disinformation campaigns succeed within a landscape of intensifying racial and political polarization, and a climate of open racialized violence and proliferating hate crimes, would it not be a recipe for brewing racial conflict and social discord in a nation that is becoming more racially, ethnically, and socially diverse?

As U.S. society and the global village expand in human, social, and identity diversity, “increasing students’ capacity to live within a democracy will be a critical component to our vitality as a nation-state” (Milner, 2023, p. 136). Ultimately, this is a work on behalf of the urgent and social necessity of racial literacy acquisition in all racialized societies, worldwide, and within

U.S. society in particular. It is an entreaty in favor of public policy becoming an intervening force, public schools becoming intervening agencies, and public educators becoming intervening agents that transform the consciousness of millions of U.S. occupants⁵ through education; which is literacy. Whether its justice, literacy, equity, belonging, resources, accountability, representation, inclusion, safety, and/or care, all roads in a racialized society are enhanced and made more legible by racial literacy. This is an appeal for racial literacy education to become a core component in the standard curricula of schools in the United States, from the elementary grades through undergraduate studies.

This appeal stands in counterpoise to the massive attack currently in progress across the country. Teachers and administrators are being silenced, targeted, and fired. Books are being banned by the score. Curricula are being emptied of race-related histories, gender-related science, social studies, political diversity, social-emotional learning, social justice education, and opportunities for racial literacy. State-level legislation is circulating in several “red states” prohibiting teachers, textbooks, lesson plans, and students from being honest. Efforts must be made to counter and transcend the racialized and weaponized politicization of public education which seeks to undermine and reverse facts, rights, and justice.

In a 1967 speech entitled “The Three Evils of Society”, Reverend Dr. King identified and linked racism, materialism/poverty, and militarism as the diabolical trifecta haunting and plaguing this nation. To be sure, the catastrophic effects and egregious crimes sponsored by these societal evils are as real today as they were then. Like the editors at *Rethinking Schools* wrote in a recent issue, “In these trying circumstances, the black revolution is much more than a struggle for the

⁵ Used as an inclusive term for all people inhabiting the national borders of the U.S. regardless of citizenship and residential status; and to acknowledge the settler-colonist status of U.S. citizens as uninvited occupiers of North American Indigenous lands.

rights of Negroes” (2022-23, p. 13). Then, echoing the ideas of the Reverend Dr. King, the editors continued: “It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws—racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism. It is exposing the evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society” (p. 13). In conclusion, the *RS* editors noted, “It reveals systemic rather than superficial flaws and suggests that radical reconstruction of society itself is the real issue to be faced” (2022-23, p. 13).

Indeed, no matter how much erasure, silencing, denying, and prohibiting of truth telling and race talk occurs in schools, the truth marches on because “racial literacy counters the mystification, and silence that has naturalized the constructed story of race and maintained racism through the myth that it is unchangeable and inherent in the ‘human’ condition” (Brown et al., 2020, p. 18). Thus, the truth must rise as a result of collective and concerted multi-generational, liberatory, and freedom dreaming work in urbanized education, racial literacy, gender equity, social justice, human/civil rights, decolonization, and prison abolition, conducted in solidarity with all oppressed beings. As the *Black Women’s Manifesto reminds us*: “The new world that we are struggling to create must destroy oppression of any type. The value of this new system will be determined by the status of those persons who are presently most oppressed—the low [person] on the totem pole. Unless women in any enslaved nation are completely liberated, the change can’t really be called a revolution...” (RS Editors, 2022-23, p. 13) or as I say: *a social transformation*.

I believe schools and public education have the power to dehumanize, democratize, or decolonize people, and transform societies for better or for worse. Public schools are tools and channels I wish for us to utilize ethically and deliberately to co-create racially just, socially responsible, equitable, sustainable, eco-aware, and environmentally friendly systems, structures, societies, and futures that are free from oppression and fertile for all to inhabit, inherit, and flourish.

8.0 Prologue

As I write the final lines of this dissertation, I am reminded that today, May 3rd, is the 60th anniversary of the Children’s Crusade of 1963 in a racially segregated Birmingham, Alabama—about four months before the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, which took the lives of four “Black” girls, rocked the nation and shocked the world. The Children’s Crusade was both the archetype and pinnacle of student activism for racial justice in the history of the United States. Earlier today, I heard a feature story about the Children’s Crusade on 89.9 FM -WWNO, the New Orleans public radio affiliate of NPR. Then, in one of my email inboxes, I received a message from Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) announcing a “National Day of Action Against Attacks on Black Studies.” Of the three items listed under what they were calling for, the first half of the third one was extremely relevant to the subject of this study. They wanted: “a commitment from universities that they will support uncensored Black Studies....” This email was so random yet timely I had to include it.

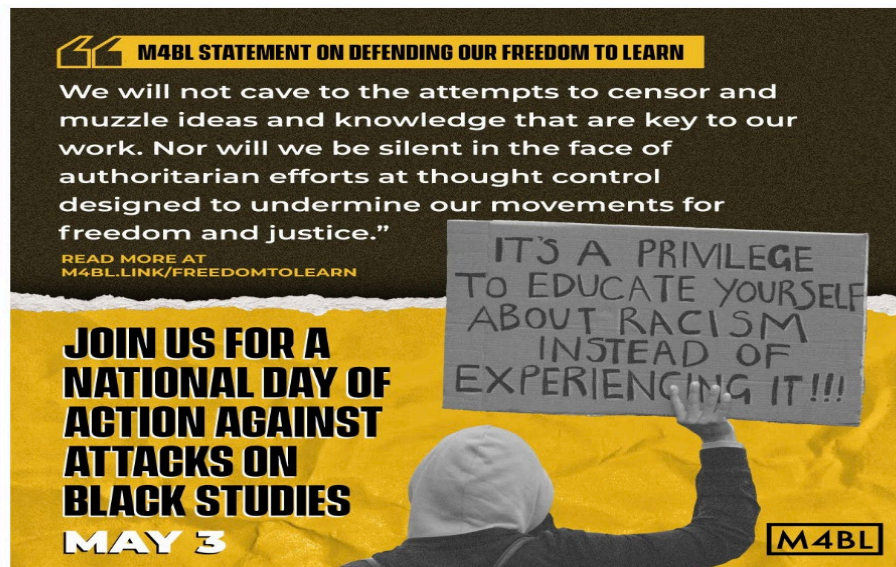


Figure 8:1 Image from M4BL National Day of Action email rec'd May 3, 2023



Fam,

We are defending our freedom to learn.

Suppression of critical ideas is a historic hallmark of fascism and authoritarianism worldwide. By censoring this knowledge, leaders of the so-called “anti-woke” agenda are advancing a vast and dangerous attack on Black and other social movements that are not limited to banning books and curricula.

Rather, they extend into the criminalization of protest; the right-wing capture of judicial and legislative institutions; the entrenchment of forced birth; and the restriction of transgender people’s freedoms, rights, and healthcare access.

Make some noise on May 3 for our National Day of Action. Our ancestors demand it!

We call for:

- The reinstatement of the original curriculum by the College Board
- The resignation of the College Board CEO
- A commitment from universities that they will support uncensored Black studies and not endorse AP tests based on censored curricula

Read the full M4BL statement on Defending Our Freedom to Learn.

You can also participate by:

- Coordinating an event (e.g., teach-in, banned book reading, town hall convening, rally, etc.) at your school, on your campus, outside, in your public library, or at your community gathering space
- Coordinating activities at state capitols or state offices where anti-CRT and anti-DEI laws, book banning, anti-trans legislation, voter suppression, anti-abortion laws, and rejection of the AP African American Studies courses have been enacted or are being proposed (for those in the states where no such laws have been enacted or proposed, coordinate activities in support of expanding equity initiatives in your state)

We will not let fascism steal our history, our future, or our knowledge. Join us in speaking out and fighting back on May 3rd.

In solidarity,
Movement for Black Lives

Figure 8:2 Defend Black Studies email from M4BL rec'd May 3, 2023-Part 1

We need to defend Black studies and our freedom to learn.  

Movement for Black Lives <contact@m4bl.org> ... 2:54 PM (1 hour ago)
to me ▾



Fam,

Black studies are under attack – and it's up to us to fight back. **Today is the Freedom to Learn National Day of Action: a day for us to denounce these attempts at censorship and nationwide attacks on antiracism and the legacy of Black studies.** [Learn more and take action with us!](#)

28 states across the country are adopting “anti-woke” measures, banning the teaching of curricula that includes Black studies, critical race theory, queer studies, and intersectionality: frameworks understanding and analyzing the workings of race, gender, class, and more throughout our society.

These frameworks and ways of thinking help students think critically about the world around them, draw connections between concrete systems of power and personal experiences, and develop a greater awareness of modern society. But we also know that suppression of critical thinking and ideas is a historical hallmark of fascism and authoritarianism. **And the censorship of curricula and the freedom to learn is just the beginning of the agenda; the attacks have and continue to spread into other areas such as the criminalization of protest, the capture of judicial and legislative power, and the entrenchment of forced birth.** These disparate issues coalesce into a form of totalitarian control aimed at limiting how and when we express ourselves.

Our history is OUR history and we cannot let others erase it. [Join us today](#) to help stop censorship and continue to educate and reframe the narrative around Black history.

Figure 8:3 Defend Black Studies email from M4BL rec'd May 3, 2023-Part 2

9.0 Postlude: The Last Word

How Does it Feel (to be “Black” in a “White World”)?

How does it feel?
How does it feel to be Black?
How does it feel to be victimized?
How does it feel to be criminalized?
How does it feel to be preyed upon?
How does it feel to be “the Super-Predator”?
How does it feel, Black people (in the audience)?
How does it feel?

In Souls of Black Folk—1903

W.E.B.//Dubois

Asked the Black readers in his audience,
“How does it feel to be a problem”?

In 2023, I am asking the Black folx in this audience,
“How does it feel to be the scene of a crime?”
“How does it feel to be seen as a crime?”
How does it feel to be Black?

Keepers of the Black Code, Black Soul, Black Love, Black Life, Black Joy, Black Pain,
Black Beauty, Black Power, Black Culture, Black History, Black Presence, Black Futures,
and... and... and... and as we are constantly reminded: the Black body—the scene of the
crime, multiplied ad infinitum.

Yes, you Black womxn, man, and child.
Your Black Body is the living, breathing scene of an ongoing crime.
A crime against your humanity.
An assault on your sanity.
Our beautiful Black bodies,
Tortured and raped for the sake of white vanity.
It’s a constant calamity:
A never-ending tragedy.
When you can’t leave the scene of the crime.

How does it feel?
How does it feel to be Black?
How does it feel to be victimized?
How does it feel to be criminalized?
How does it feel to be preyed upon?
How does it feel to be “the Super-Predator”?
How does it feel, Black people (in the audience)?

How does it feel?

How does it feel to be both the prey and predator?
How would we know? We ain't no super-predators!
If [we're] anything [super]...
We're super-beings being super-preyed upon—by...
Wolves in priest's clothing, and
Pigs in blue suits-n-boots, and
Rats in corporate expense account suits, and
Snakes in white hoods, and
Bats in red MAGA hats

How does it feel to be that guy in the Public Enemy logo?
A bull's eye in the crosshair
A moving target in the riflescope of white rage
The ring it forms around our heads fits like a crown,
Or better yet, a halo.
Este no bueno. Never mind them sweet sounds.
Forced into early sainthood, ain't good.
Just ask:

St. George Floyd
St. Breonna Taylor
St. Ahmaud Arbury
St. Sandra Bland
St. Amadou Diallo
St. Sean Bell
St. Rodney King
St. Martin Luther King
St. Philando Castille
St. Tamir Rice
St. Michael Brown
St. Eric Garner
St. Trayvon Martin
St. Freddie Gray
St. Makiya Bryant
St. Fred Hampton
St. Medgar Evers
St. Malcolm Malik Shabazz

Being forced into early sainthood, ain't good.
Todos no bueno.
Todos no sueño.
Just ask:
the 9 saints of Emanuel AME in Charleston South Carolina.
Say their names!
St. Rev. Clementa Pinckney

St. Cynthia Hurd
St. Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton
St. Tywanza Sanders
St. Ethel Lance
St. Susie Jackson
St. Depayne Middleton Doctor
St. Rev. Daniel Simmons
St. Myra Thompson

Being forced into early sainthood, ain't good.
Just ask:
the 4 saints of 16th St. Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.
Say their names!

St. Denis McNair
St. Addie Mae Collins
St. Carole Robertson
St. Cynthia Wesley

And it's not just the deceased who are sainted by the cross on their backs and halos on their heads. Just ask St. Assata Shakur.
How does it feel to be the scene of a crime St. Assata?
How does it feel to be seen as a crime St. Shakur?

(whispered) Endure. Endure. Endure.

You don't need me to tell you how it feels, she might say.
Our people are living it every day.
But I can tell you what we must do, no matter what.
(What's that?)
We must endure.
Our essence is pure.
If they are the curse, we are the cure.

They are the Super-Predators; we are the Super-Prey.
We stayed prayed up and laid up inside the Black Magic Way.
Resurrecting ancestors in every baby made.
Fear of a Black Planet is why they're afraid.
So, they keep us distracted with getting paid.
Unconsciously got us digging our own early graves.
Our bodies, marked daily, as the scenes of the crime.
Trapped and mapped onto a global paradigm.
Where the scenes of the crimes multiply exponentially.
Potentially covering the earth like Western colonization.

anti-Black,

patriarchal,
capitalist,
racist,
fascist,
misogynistic,
xenophobic,
militaristic,
industrialist,
political,
economic,
scientific, and
religious crime scenes cover the earth like air.
Every single organism on the planet except the one known as “the white male”,
is under the gun...
...of the sick, white dick.
People of color,
women,
children,
animals,
plants,
minerals,
water,
air,
earth,
oil,
diamonds,
land,
metals,
energy,
space, and even
time
are all...
...scenes of a crime.

Appendix A : Petition From Sydney Massenberg (University of Pittsburgh)

Petition · Require that all Pitt students take a black studies course · Change.org



7,320 have signed. Let's get to 7,500!

At 7,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get a reaction from the **decision maker!**

- Started by Sydney Massenberg – University of Pittsburgh

During my time as a Pitt student, I've always felt as though all my non-black classmates would benefit from learning more about what it means to be Black in America, but I knew that many of them would be able graduate without taking such a class. This lack of knowledge has negative consequences in university communities across the country, and I want Pitt to lead the way in making a real change.

I am calling for Pitt to mandate that every undergraduate student takes a black studies course as a part of university graduation requirements.

I have written and attached the letter I've sent to our university's leadership, and I hope you'll all read it to hear my explanation. If this is something you support or something you would at least be interested in starting a larger conversation about, I encourage you to sign and show Pitt leadership where the minds of its students are with regards to making meaningful change on our campus. I have been disappointed in Pitt for its reaction to anti-black events in the past, but I hope that the university adopts this recommendation and shows its Black students that it is serious about changing up the status quo.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HRxgkclT6LzQxQjJJ-b0y2kAqBn9v4y-jtla4nTEMIa/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://www.change.org/p/university-of-pittsburgh-administrators-require-that-students-take-a-black-studies-course-at-pitt>

Petition · Require that all Pitt students take a black studies course · Change.org

Appendix B : Official Letter From Sydney Massenberg

To Chancellor Gallagher, Dean Bonner, Provost Cudd, and Faculty Senate President Bonneau:

My name is Sydney Massenberg. I am a proud, Black alumna of the University of Pittsburgh, and will be a student at New York University School of Law this coming fall. Amidst yet another demonstration of racism and violence against Black Americans, I recognize that the University is planning to demonstrate solidarity by taking new initiatives toward meaningful change, with the hope of facilitating the journey to a more robust racial equity on Pitt's campus, and I would like to share an idea for your consideration.

While studying at Pitt for my degrees in political science and psychology, as well as a minor in Africana studies, I had opportunities to take classes that have delved into Black history, racism, White privilege, and other related subtopics. While I seized that opportunity, thousands of my classmates were able to obtain their university degrees without completing anything of the like. Self-selection into these courses creates a picture where the majority of the students in classes focusing on Black issues are Black or non-Black people of color, when White students would stand to gain equally as much, if not *more*, from learning about these topics that have been neglected in the standard public-school education.

Not only is the lack of White participation noticeable, but that lack of knowledge becomes very visible when our White counterparts make comments in other classes that are plainly misinformed, ignorant, and often offensive. With this letter I would like to discuss the effects of students lacking historical and cultural competencies, and a step the University might consider taking toward remedying this.

I am calling for all undergraduate students – regardless of the area of study – to be required to take at LEAST one course focusing on the Black experience as part of university degree requirements.

The University of Pittsburgh currently allows each school and college within the undergraduate programs to hold its students to different general-education requirements. Almost every set of requirements indicate that students are to take courses falling under the umbrellas of what Pitt has deemed “Diversity,” “Nonwestern Culture,” “Global Awareness and Cultural Understanding,” “Foreign/International Culture,” or “Historical Change,” courses. This is without a doubt an important step toward facilitating well-rounded education and creating an environment of inclusion and awareness. However, many of the courses that fulfill these requirements do not guarantee that students gain exposure to critical race theory, or that they gain an understanding of how their interactions with individuals of unfamiliar cultures, backgrounds, and experiences can impact entire communities. I argue that there is a need for the **revision of current general education requirements**, entailing that students take a course that specifically covers topics of

black history and/or race theory, allowing for the examination of blackness in our society and its relationship to law, politics, and power, thus helping them to be effective allies.

Ideally, this would be a part of every student's first year course load, since there are many who come to campus having had little-to-no exposure to Black students and people, nor an awareness of what it means to be Black in America. This would set the stage for more positive educational experiences for **all** students, as well as send a strong message to Black students that Pitt is aware of this unique set of issues and is committed to an atmosphere of inclusion and support.

The students of this country have repeatedly been denied an accurate and honest account of American history, and we regularly see the results of these discrepancies playing out in real time. We all hold the responsibility of reshaping and improving society as we navigate it, but lacking the clarity of what history realistically entails often leads to an underestimation of the issue of race as a whole and facilitates a false sense of confidence that addressing the issue is simple. Addressing racism does not fall upon the shoulders of Black people alone. White people have to take steps toward actively being against racism, and the first step is learning about this history and recognizing one's inherent privilege as a result of it.

I know that this is a reasonable request because there are other top universities that have taken steps far more drastic. Professor Emily Walton teaches a required course on Black history and White privilege at Dartmouth College and reflects, in her op-ed, "All College Students Should Take a Mandatory Course on Black History and White Privilege," on the important lessons students learn and the takeaways that they apply far outside her classroom.⁶ A 2013 survey conducted at Northeastern University by Boatright-Horowitz and associates also revealed that white students, after evaluating their beliefs regarding the amount of racism in society and then having light shed on the ways they experienced White privilege, were more likely to acknowledge that more racism exists than they initially thought, and that it might affect their personal behavior.⁷ I also know that this is a realistic request specific to Pitt because of my own experience. I have personally had the opportunity to learn from several Pitt professors who are powerful educators on the Black experience both within the university and the Pittsburgh community, and who have created productive spaces challenging students' perspectives and forcing them to think critically about their own experiences as they relate to their race and background.

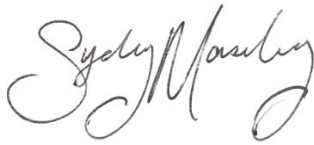
⁶ Emily Walton, "All college students should take a mandatory course on black history and white privilege." USA Today, 2019.

⁷ Boatright-Horowitz, et al., "Difficult times for college students of color: teaching white students about White Privilege provides hope for change." EBSCOhost, 2013

Pitt accepting the responsibility of educating its students in Black history would be a very tangible and visible expression of its regard for all students' success, as well as its value of diversity and inclusion. The university has an opportunity to be a leader on this issue, and as an institution with a small percentage of Black students and faculty, it is an opportunity to alert the community that Pitt is not content to simply continue conducting business as usual. Most other colleges and universities also have a lot of work to do in the realm of creating more welcoming spaces for Black students. A study surveying approximately 24,000 juniors and seniors at the University of California revealed that students of color typically experience a decreased sense of belonging compared to their white counterparts, and this sense of belonging is correlated to retention and graduation rates.⁸ Racism – in both its blatant and subtle forms – creates environments of exclusion, causes stress and other adverse mental and physiological health outcomes for those who experience it, and is, without a doubt, a hindrance to Black success.

Every person and organization has a responsibility to constantly evaluate their contributions to societal well-being. I hope that the University of Pittsburgh – being the top public university in the Northeast – will consider these concerns and be a leader during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sydney Massenberg". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Sydney" and last name "Massenberg" clearly legible.

Sydney Massenberg – a proud, but frustrated alumna hoping for change.

⁸ John Hernandez, "How colleges are mishandling racial tensions on campus." APM Reports, 2019.

Appendix C : Chancellor Gallagher's Statement on Racial Injustice And...



Office of the Chancellor (/)

Statement on Racial Injustice and the Death of George Floyd

June 2, 2020

Dear Members of the University Community:

It is impossible to forget the image of George Floyd, gasping for air as a police officer who is sworn to protect and defend calmly kneels on his neck until he dies. It is both a shocking scene of violence that should never happen and a potent reminder that it continues to happen all the time.

The painful truth is that persistent and systemic racism continues to fuel a deep injustice toward African Americans. The familiarity of this tragedy has ignited widespread protests and demonstrations—not only across our country, but across the globe.

We are outraged because it is outrageous. How many times must we witness these blatant examples of injustice, hatred, brutality and discrimination before we resolve to change things?

This is a time for demonstrating solidarity with our African American community. To the University of Pittsburgh's African American students, faculty, staff and alumni: We stand with you in demanding better and are committed to working with you to make meaningful changes.

Unfortunately, grief and anger are emotions too easily exploited. Some are happy to create confusion, sow conflict and incite violence and ultimately erode our fundamental rights to peaceably gather and demand real change. This, too, is a painfully familiar pattern. Against a rising toll of injury, death and recrimination, we stand to lose our solidarity—replacing it with ever-deepening divisions. Do we have to go down this road?

In this moment of raw grief and anger, we must plot a path forward. We must find ways to build bridges, listen and empathize—even when it is uncomfortable. And we must demand better of our leaders, holding them accountable by voting and pushing to reform the laws and institutions of our democracy. Working together, we have enormous power to realize change.

But this is also a time to turn the lens inward and consider our institution's own role in perpetuating unfair structures and systems. A university is not an ivory tower but an extension of society—a place dedicated to advancing knowledge for everyone's gain. Racism degrades our pursuit of true equality, liberty and justice, and it undermines our ability to create opportunity through teaching, research and service.

Our university must become a better, more equitable place, and we can do more.

These local efforts may seem like small acts in the face of a national civil crisis, but they can catalyze powerful change. The University of Pittsburgh is a longstanding leader in our region. Yet, for all of our remarkable accomplishments, African Americans living within the Cathedral of Learning's shadow are still confronting an alarming opportunity gap. We can expand our efforts to translate our work into practice and spur a local renaissance in our surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Reshaping our university to be more diverse, inclusive and just—while also expanding our reach and impact in promoting social justice—is a significant effort, and we will need to resource and sustain this transformation over time. Because of this, I am putting our nearly complete strategic planning process—which aims to chart Pitt's course over the next five years—on hold. This pause will give us time to incorporate specific strategies to strengthen our commitments to racial equity and justice. I will need your help in identifying the most promising initiatives in this final plan, and I hope you will participate.

To jumpstart this work, we are scheduling and planning a number of opportunities to convene virtually so that we can share ideas, experiences and expertise related to eliminating racism and injustice near and far. In the days ahead, we must continue to stand in solidarity as we work to forge a better, more equitable future for all.

Respectfully,

Patrick Gallagher

Office of the Chancellor (/)

4200 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-4200
Revised 07/26/22



Appendix D : Provost Cudd's Letter Announcing the ABR-Course



University of
Pittsburgh

Office of the Provost

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff on the Pittsburgh Campus,

It is always inspiring to see students coming to campus in the fall, many of whom are leaving home for the first time to begin their University and adult-life adventure. Launching into an unknown but promising future requires courage and commitment. That is true this year more than ever.

In this unprecedented semester, we offer faculty and students multiple options for participating in in- and out-of-class activities and information to make informed decisions. Planning for a safe, engaging return to campus during the COVID-19 pandemic has focused on three things: determining the facts about the virus and how to control infection, designing a resilient mode of teaching and research to maximize our ability to pursue our mission in any condition the pandemic presents, and communicating the risks and the measures needed to keep each other and our community safe.

Our [healthcare](#) and [facilities experts](#) have designed and executed careful [safety preparations](#); students are arriving on campus and in Oakland in an orderly, staged manner with shelter-in-place instructions and surveillance testing to determine the prevalence of infection; we are monitoring and posting the results publicly; and we have shared information about the [health rules](#) that we all need to follow. Our classrooms have been checked and their HVAC systems tuned [to meet CDC guidelines for ventilation](#). They have been carefully measured and marked so students and faculty are not within 6 feet of one another for any length of time. In addition, our students created and committed to a [Campus Community Compact](#), which has been shared with faculty and staff.

Our new teaching modality, [Flex@Pitt](#), allows us to use technology to teach and learn in any situation the pandemic presents and also allows faculty and students the option to teach and learn remotely in all conditions. Although I had hoped that after beginning the first week of the semester remotely we would move immediately to mostly in-person classes, we now think it prudent to **extend the remote period until September 14**. This adjustment to the schedule will allow for the completion of staged arrival and shelter-in-place procedures so that all students can start in-person classes at the same time. Additional information about what in-person classes will take place while Pitt is in the Elevated Risk posture will be forthcoming.

This summer we have also spent considerable time [reckoning with societal injustice](#) in the form of police brutality and systemic anti-Black racism throughout society. We have heard from our Black students, as well as Black faculty and staff, that our campus is not the safe, inclusive, and equitable place for all that we are committed to creating. I am grateful for their courage in speaking out and demanding change.

As you have heard from [Chancellor Gallagher](#), we are responding with significant changes across all our University operations and academic pursuits to create the anti-racist university that we aspire to be. I am excited to announce that among the first of these changes is a new course, designed by a [committee of expert faculty](#). The course, [*AntiBlack Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance*](#), is a free, one-credit course that we are requiring of all our first-year students and offering to all enrolled students. The asynchronous course consists of a series of lectures given by renowned faculty, staff, and activists, is scheduled for one hour per week, and is graded on an S/NC basis. All first-year students will be automatically enrolled in the course for the fall term. It will also be made available to faculty and staff and the broader community beginning in a few weeks.

The course is designed to inform us all about Black history and culture, about the multiple forms of anti-Black racism, and about how we can be anti-racist. This course is a deposit on our commitment to transform our institution and our society, beginning with education and focusing on our future through the special class of 2024.

In the two years that I have served as Provost, our local as well as broader community has been tragically assaulted by hate, torn by xenophobic attacks both local and national, tested by a raging pandemic, and challenged to reckon with our own racism and complicity with evil. While I mourn our losses and condemn the perpetrators, dissemblers, and collaborators, I could not be prouder of our collective efforts to overcome. Together we can rise above our challenges and become the caring, committed, and transformative beacon of truth and inquiry that we aspire to be. In spite of the challenges, there is nowhere I would rather be than here, striving for positive change with all of you.

Finally, to all of our students I say: We are so glad you are here (whether in-person or virtually); we are grateful for your courage and determination; and we are committed to your safety and well-being. You energize us and give our work meaning and a noble purpose. To our faculty and staff, as always, thank you for your dedication to our mission.

Hail to Pitt!

Ann E. Cudd
Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

Appendix E : Syllabus for PITT 0210 - Course in Anti-Black Racism



Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance (PITT 0210) — Final Course Syllabus

Course Overview

In the wake of the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and many others in recent months, activists and scholars in the United States have taken to the streets, the workplace, and classrooms to decry anti-Black racism and call attention to the ongoing devaluation of Black lives in the U.S. and globally. The wave of uprisings that have swept the nation and globe represent part of a long struggle of anti-racist organizing—one that can be traced back hundreds of years.

This multidisciplinary course seeks to provide a broad overview of this rich and dynamic history. Built around the expertise of Pitt faculty and Pittsburgh area activists, this course will introduce students to the established tradition of scholarship focused on the Black experience and Black cultural expression. It also seeks to examine the development, spread, and articulations of anti-Black racism in the United States and around the world.

The course will grapple with three key areas of inquiry: the roots, ideology, and resistance to anti-Black racism. Each unit will be focused through readings, lectures and discussions. First, we will explore the roots of anti-Black racism in the United States, drawing connections to African history, the history of slavery, and the Transatlantic Slave trade. Second, the course will grapple with the ideology of anti-Black racism—the ideas that undergird the creation of racial hierarchies, often shaped by pseudo-science and eugenics. Third, the course will highlight the theme of resistance, paying close attention to the range of political strategies and tactics Black activists and their allies have employed in their effort to obtain a more just and equal society here and internationally. Significantly, the course employs an intersectional analysis—taking into account how race is interwoven into other categories including ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality and nationality. We will use a variety of scholarly disciplines spanning the Humanities, Social Sciences, the Arts, Science and Public Health to explore these themes to help students understand how anti-Black racism functions in U.S. society.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

Objectives

After meaningfully engaging with the content in this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe and explain key ideas and concepts concerning the social construction of race and ethnicity
2. Identify historical and current structures of power, privilege, and inequality that are rooted in Anti-Black racism
3. Explain how anti-Black racism acts individually, interpersonally, institutionally, and structurally
4. Identify and describe the contribution of scholars and experts on anti-Black racism at Pitt and in the larger community
5. Articulate and critically examine personal beliefs and opinions about race, antiracism and antiblackness and describe the weight these beliefs and opinions carry.
6. Explain how institutions and policies contribute to and enable Anti-Black racism
7. Identify some of the many existing organizations that provide anti-racism programming and opportunities

Outcomes

1. Students will leave the course with introductory knowledge to participate more knowledgably in discussions of race, inequality, and other aspects of social difference
2. Students will leave the course with an introduction to the Black radical tradition, resistance to Anti-Black racism, and strategies to be anti-racist in everyday life

We hope that this course will encourage students to continue taking other courses related to anti-Black racism and the Black experience. The course should also provide pathways for students interested in transforming their own role in confronting anti-Black racism.

Grading: This course is graded on an S/NC basis. There will be brief questions that students will have to answer on canvas after each lecture. These questions are designed to check for comprehension of the lecture and/or readings.

There will also be synchronous activities available, especially during Black Study Week, organized by the Center for African American Poetry and Poetics (CAAPP) (see Week Seven). Students will be required to attend at least one synchronous activity during Black Study Week. All synchronous activities will be listed on Canvas. There will also be a short pre- and post-assessment survey that all students will be required to complete as well.

Credit: This course is a 1 credit course.

Readings: All required readings will be available through Canvas.

Recordings: All recorded lectures will be added to the Detailed Course Schedule below as they become available.

Course Schedule

- Week One: Introduction to Course; Race as a construct/concept/Critical race theory
- Week Two: Pre-colonial African History and Misconceptions of Africa
- Week Three: Era of Enslavement
- Week Four: Reconstruction & Post-reconstruction violence and migration
- Week Five: COINTELPRO - Pittsburgh
- Week Six: Contemporary Black liberation movements
- Week Seven: Black Study Week (CAAPP)
- Week Eight: Health Disparities
- Week Nine: Black Internationalism and Anti-racism
- Week Ten: Racial capitalism/disinvestment in Black communities/housing
- Week Eleven: Formal Schooling and Anti-Blackness
- Week Twelve: Migration, Globalization, and Anti-Black Racism
- Week Thirteen: How to be Anti-Racist
- Week Fourteen: Student Choice (choose one):
 - Afro-Futurism
 - Heritage as Hate: Racism and Sporting Traditions
 - Race and Technology

Note: All recorded lectures will be added to the Detailed Course Schedule below as they become available.

Detailed Course Schedule

Click orange arrow to access more information about each week.

- Week One: An Introduction to Critical Theories on Race and Anti-Blackness in Everyday Life
- Week Two: Pre-colonial African History and Misconceptions of Africa
- Week Three: Slavery and Emancipation
- Week Four: Who Belongs in the Reconstructed United States?
- Week Five: COINTELPRO - Pittsburgh
- Week Six: Contemporary Black Liberation Movements
- Week Seven: Black Arts-Black Study Week (Center for African American Poetry and Poetics)
- Week Eight: Health Disparities in Black Communities
- Week Nine: Black Internationalism and Anti-racism
- Week Ten: U.S. Racist Housing Policy
- Week Eleven: Formal Schooling and Anti-Blackness
- Week Twelve: Migration, Globalization, and Anti-Black Racism
- Week Thirteen: How to be Anti-racist
- Week Fourteen: OPTION 1: Afro-Futurism
- Week Fourteen: OPTION 2: Heritage as Hate: Racism and Sporting Traditions
- Week Fourteen: OPTION 3: Race and Technology

Want to Learn More?

Additional Courses to Consider
Related Resources



Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance (PITT 0210)

View the Final Course Syllabus (/node/1707)—and video recordings of all sessions—for this new multidisciplinary course offered at the University of Pittsburgh.

Review Frequently Asked Questions (/node/1709) regarding the course.

View membership of Provost's Committee on Anti-Black Racism and Transformative Pedagogy (/node/1714).

Course Contact

Questions about the Anti-Black Racism course?

Email ABR-Course@pitt.edu (<mailto:ABR-Course@pitt.edu>).

Course Suggestions

If you would like to request the addition of an affiliated course or resource for the new Anti-Black Racism course syllabus, please fill out the recommendation form (https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eh3ZuolYc3ZdBdP).

A valid Pitt email address is required for submission.



Office of the Provost (/)
University of Pittsburgh
Office of the Provost
801 Cathedral of Learning
412-624-4222
provost@pitt.edu (mailto:provost@pitt.edu)
Accessibility Statement (<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/accessibility-statement>)
Academic Calendar (/students/academic-calendar)
Faculty Handbook (<https://www.facultyhandbook.pitt.edu/>)
Policies & Guidelines (/node/1094)
Pitt Concern Connection (<https://app.convercent.com/en-us/LandingPage/2d6327d5-9fec-ea11a974-000d3ab9f296>)

Contact

Student Affairs: 412-648-1006	Financial Aid/Admissions: 412-624-7488
Pitt Research: 412-624-7400	Human Resources: 412-624-7000

Office of the Registrar/ Academic Calendar:
412-624-7600
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Appendix F : Protocol for Semi-Structured Interviews

1. Tell me about your role in the development and/or delivery of the Course in Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance. Including how and why you got involved.
(Depending on how much detail is given, I may ask:) Please tell me more about your specific contributions or connections or responsibilities to the course.
2. Let's think back to the summer and fall of 2020. Talk to me about your main memories concerning the course. Follow up: Tell me the story of this course from your perspective—what is the course in Anti-Black Racism in your words?
3. Talk to me about the concerns, complexities, or challenges you observed or encountered during any stages of the course. How about in hindsight?
4. Share with me some noteworthy and novel insights and reflections about the process, practice, and politics of this endeavor?
5. What hopes do you hold for the Course in Anti-Black Racism on both a microcosmic (Pitt/local) and macrocosmic (national/global) level?
6. Is there any advice you would offer to other educators who want to be or are already engaged in creating a similar course within their universities?
7. At which stage of educational development do you think this type of course should be introduced to students attending U.S. public schools? Why? And when/if it is/were introduced, should it be: (a) optional; (b) a prioritized elective; or (c) a required course? And if offered/required prior to college, should parental consent be required? Why/why not?

Appendix G : Interview Protocol for Focus Groups

- A. How did participating in this course change or enhance your understanding of race, racism, and the racial climate in the United States?
- B. Did the course in ABR help you reexamine YOUR attitudes and beliefs about racial bias... and better recognize your own biased behaviors?
- C. Did the course improve your ability to recognize biased behaviors in others, including friends and family, and larger society?
- D. Did participating in this course help you hold more informed conversations about race, racism, and anti-Black racism?
- E. (In which ways) Did this course help you think differently about current events within the context of anti-Black racism?
- F. If being antiracist means actively identifying and challenging racists policies, did participating in this course inspire you to be antiracist? (Why not?) If so, did it help you identify how to be antiracist in your daily life?
- G. Did you find this course valuable? Why or why not?
- H. Do you think this type of course—a course that aims to educate students of all races on the historical and current contexts of race, racism, and anti-Black racism within the racialized climate of the United States and throughout the colonized/westernized world—should be available/taught:
 - I** at all public universities across the U.S.? Why/why not? If so, should be (A) simply optional, (B) a recommended elective, or (C) a required course?

II. at all public high schools across the U.S.? Why/why not? If so, should be (A) simply optional, (B) a recommended elective, or (C) a required course?

III. at all public middle schools across the U.S.? Why/why not? If so, should be an optional, or a required course?

IV. at all public elementary schools across the U.S.? Why/why not? If so, should it require parental consent/opt-in or be a required course?

Appendix H : Petitions at Other Universities Inspired by Massenberg's Petition



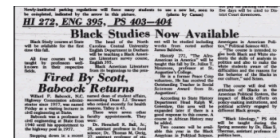
Corinne Baccanti started this petition to Penn State University Administrators

A woman who attended Pitt, Sydney Massenberg, recently began a Change petition to require this of all Pitt students at all campuses. I attended Penn State (Behrend, New Kensington, and Main) and agree with her completely - all of my non-black classmates would benefit from learning more about what it means to be Black in America. This lack of knowledge has negative consequences in university communities across the country, and I want Penn State to lead the way in making a real change. And, don't we Penn Staters love our Pitt rivalry? Perfect time to put it to good use and see which school can step up for a better future first.

I am calling for Penn State to mandate that every undergraduate student takes a black studies course as a part of university graduation requirements.

Petition to University System of Georgia, University System of Alaska, University System of Arka

Make a Black Studies class a requirement for ALL Undergraduates



...[This petition was inspired by **Sydney Massenberg** and her call for the University of Pittsburgh to...

Milan Sturgis Valdosta, GA, United States 86 supporters Created Jun 11, 2020

Petition to Penn State University Administrators

Require That All Penn State Students Take A Black Studies Course



...A woman who attended Pitt... [Read more](#)

Corinne Baccanti Pittsburgh, PA, United States 29 supporters Created Jun 6, 2020

Figure 9:1 Screenshots of Petitions at Other Universities Posted on Change.org



At 100 signatures, this petition is more likely to be featured in recommendations!

Newly-instituted parking regulations will force many students to use a new lot, soon to be completed, indicated by the arrow in this picture. (photo by Caram)

not pay his parking fine within five days will be cited to District Court downtown.

HI 272, ENG 395, PS 403-404

Black Studies Now Available

Black Study courses at State will be available for the first time this fall.

The head of the North Carolina Central University English Department in Durham will be teaching a Black American Literature survey course, English 395.

Black American Literature from its beginnings to the present will be studied including works from noted author James Baldwin.

History 272, "The Afro-American in America" will be taught this fall by Dr. Julius T. Nimmons, professor at St. Augustine's College.

He is a former Peace Corp volunteer. He has received the Outstanding Teacher in Social Sciences Award from St. Augustine's.

According to State History Department Head Ralph W. Greenlaw, this area will be expanded later if there is a good response to this course. A course in African History may be added.

Two courses will be available this year in the Black American in Political Science. Thomas E. Scism, State

Americans in American Politics," Political Science 403.

"The course is intended to give both Black and White students the skills of analysis in politics and also to make the white students aware of the difficulties and the reasons for the behavior of the Blacks in our culture," said Scism.

The course will deal with attitudes of Blacks in the American Political System, the impact of Blacks efforts on policy-making institutions, and political activity engaged by different Black groups.

"Black Ideology," PS 404 will be taught during the Spring semester by Dr. Elias S. Themas, assistant professor of politics here.

Fired By Scott, Babcock Returns

Willard F. Babcock, N.C. Highway Commission administrator since 1957, was named Friday as a visiting lecturer in civil engineering at State.

Babcock was a professor in civil engineering at State from 1940 until his appointment to the highway post in 1957.

Stepping down in a recent Commission shakedown by

named dean of student affairs, succeeding Dean J.J. Stewart who retired recently for health reasons. Talley is 43.

There were seven other faculty appointments. They were:

Dr. Herschell R. Ball, Jr., 28, assistant professor in food science; Dr. Thomas M. Gerig, 27, assistant professor of statistics; Dr. Tilden H. Glesser

Make a Black Studies class a requirement for ALL Undergraduates

86 have signed. Let's get to 100!



At 100 signatures, this petition is more likely to be featured in recommendations!



Milan Sturgis started this petition to University System of Georgia and 45 others

{This petition was inspired by Sydney Massenberg and her call for the University of Pittsburgh to require all undergrad students to take a black studies course in order to graduate.}

I am calling on the University Systems of Ga and (other University/College systems in the US) to implement that all undergraduate students must take a Black Studies course as a requirement for graduation.

In order to make these university communities safe for black students, other students need to know the history of their black peers. With everything going on today and tomorrow, it is clear that many non-black people have to "re-teach" themselves on racism and how to not be racist.

Other non-black people are skating through college with racist ideologies and implementing them through their work in their careers. Having racists in any field, especially medical, is a reason why many black people are not living comfortably or at all. This leads to systemic/institutionalized racism. If the universities want to support their black students, start with re-teaching students the history of black people and systemic racism.

It is highly unacceptable to scroll through social media and seeing people who are being racist, pursuing degrees, especially in the medical and other health fields. If social media doesn't catch it first, it will go unnoticed. That should never be the case. Universities need to do their part in making sure this does not happen.

Sign this petition

Figure 9:2 Image of Petition Launched for Uni System of Georgia



At 100 signatures, this petition is more likely to be featured in recommendations!



Petition details Comments Updates



Require That All Penn State Students Take A Black Studies Course

29 have signed. Let's get to 100!



At 100 signatures, this petition is more likely to be featured in recommendations!



Corinne Baccanti started this petition to Penn State University Administrators

A woman who attended Pitt, Sydney Massenberg, recently began a Change petition to require this of all Pitt students at all campuses. I attended Penn State (Behrend, New Kensington, and Main) and agree with her completely - all of my non-black classmates would benefit from learning more about what it means to be Black in America. This lack of knowledge has negative consequences in university communities across the country, and I want Penn State to lead the way in making a real change. And, don't we Penn Staters love our Pitt rivalry? Perfect time to put it to good use and see which school can step up for a better future first.

I am calling for Penn State to mandate that every undergraduate student takes a black studies course as a part of university graduation requirements.

Sydney sent a letter to Pitt university's leadership, I have attached it below and I hope you'll all read it to hear her explanation. If this is something you support or something you would at least be interested in starting a larger conversation about, I encourage you to sign and show Penn State leadership where the minds of its students - past, current, and future - are with regards to making meaningful change on our campuses. I hope that the university adopts this recommendation and shows its Black students that it is serious about changing up the status quo.

Sign this petition

Figure 9:3 Image of Petition Launched at Penn State University

Appendix I : Pre-Course Survey for PITT 0210: Course in Anti-Black Racism

The pre-course survey spans four pages. For the survey questions that have drop-down menus for participants to make their selection (pre-SQs: 1, 2, 3, and post-SQ4) an image of that drop-down menu and the options presented are included.

Question 1		1 pts
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?		
a. White people in the US have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	<div>✓ [Select]</div> <div>1 Strongly Disagree</div>	
b. Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.	<div>2</div>	
c. Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.	<div>3</div>	
d. Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the US.	<div>4</div>	
e. Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the US.	<div>5</div>	
f. White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.	<div>6 Strongly Agree</div>	
g. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people.	[Select]	
h. White people in the US are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.	[Select]	
i. Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.	[Select]	
j. Racial and ethnic minorities in the US have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	[Select]	
k. Racial problems in the US are rare, isolated situations.	[Select]	
l. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	[Select]	
m. Racism is a major problem in the US.	[Select]	
n. It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.	[Select]	

Figure 9:4 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Question One

Question 2		1 pts
Generally, how often do you think about each of the following?		
a. race	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> ✓ [Select] Never Rarely Sometimes Often </div>	
b. anti-Black racism		
c. white privilege		
d. structural racism	[Select]	
e. racial profiling	[Select]	
f. police violence	[Select]	

Figure 9:5 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Question Two

Question 3		1 pts
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?		
a. I can explain how race and ethnicity are social constructs.	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> ✓ [Select] Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree </div>	
b. I can explain how current structures of power, privilege, and inequity are rooted in anti-Black racism.		
c. I can explain how anti-Black racism works at the individual level.		
d. I can explain how anti-Black racism works at the institutional level.	[Select]	
e. I can explain how anti-Black racism works structurally.	[Select]	
f. I can critically examine my own opinions about race, anti-Black racism, and antiracism.	[Select]	
g. I know about the Black radical tradition and histories of resistance to anti-Black racism.	[Select]	

Figure 9:6 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Question Three

Demographics: Again, your responses will be confidential.

Question 4

1 pts

What is your Gender?

- ☐ Non-binary/third gender/gender queer
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Question 5

1 pts

Do you identify as transgender?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Figure 9:7 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Questions Four & Five

Question 6

1 pts

What is your race? (select all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Mixed Race or Multiracial
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Question 7

1 pts

Are you Hispanic or Latino or of Spanish Origin?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Figure 9:8 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Questions Six & Seven

Question 8	1 pts
<p>How would you describe your hometown?</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Rural</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Suburban</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Urban</p>	

Question 9	1 pts
<p>What is your parents' or guardians' highest level of education?</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Some high school</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> High school graduate</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Some college</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> College graduate</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Masters or professional degree</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> PhD</p>	

Figure 9:9 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Questions Eight & Nine

Question 10	1 pts
<p>How would you describe yourself politically?</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Farther right</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Right</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Moderate</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Left</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Farther left</p>	

Figure 9:10 Screenshot of Pre-Course Survey Question Ten

Appendix J : Post-Course Survey for PITT 0210: Course in Anti-Black Racism

Questions four, five, six and seven on the post-course survey. Questions one, two, and three were identical to their counterparts on the pre-course survey.

Question 41 pts

How did participating in this course change your understanding of race and racism in the United States?

EditViewInsertFormatToolsTable

12ptParagraphBBI²LinkImageTableCaptionTextColorBackground ColorUndoRedo

p0 words

Figure 9:11 Screenshot of Post-Course Survey Question Four

Question 61 pts

Did you find this course valuable, why or why not?

EditViewInsertFormatToolsTable

12ptParagraphBBI²LinkImageTableCaptionTextColorBackground ColorUndoRedo

p0 words

Figure 9:12 Screenshot of Post-Course Survey Question Six

Question 5		1 pts
To what extent did participating in this course help you to.....		
a. think about current events differently	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> ✓ [Select] Not at all A little Some A great deal </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
b. think about yourself differently	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
c. reexamine your own perspectives	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
d. think about history differently	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
e. understand better the racial climate in the US	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
f. hold more informed conversations about race and racism	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
g. better recognize biased behaviors/actions in others	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
h. better identify biased behaviors/actions in yourself	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>
i. identify ways to be antiracist	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; background-color: #fff; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> [Select] </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%; height: 100%;"></div> </div>

Figure 9:13 Screenshot of Post-Course Survey Question Five

Demographics: Again, your responses will be confidential.

Question 7		1 pts
How would you describe yourself politically?		
<input type="radio"/> Farther right		
<input type="radio"/> Right		
<input type="radio"/> Moderate		
<input type="radio"/> Left		
<input type="radio"/> Farther left		

Figure 9:14 Screenshot of Post-Course Survey Question Seven

Appendix K : Examples of “Ideal Feel” Responses (n = 120/9%)

Participating in this course really taught me a lot about racism in the United States. As a white woman, I spent a lot of my summer learning about white privilege and racial discrimination in response to the racism in our nation that was brought to light through the murders of innocent Black people. I never realized how little we actually learn about racism in school and how it is often taught as if it is a thing of the past. After taking this course, I have a much better understanding of my privilege and how much work there is still left to do in our nation to combat institutionalized racism.

Participating in this course changed my understanding of race and racism in the United States because it gave me the necessary tools to make my own informed decisions about the race conflict happening in America. It also gave me a greater understanding of the hurdles African Americans must overcome and previously I was not exposed to these because I come from a predominantly white town. Before this course, I knew that racism still occur in the United States but this course gave me a lot more background on the subject and has made me much more aware of the problems happening in our country surrounding race and racism.

As unfortunate as it is to say, I became much more aware of the inequality and the racism that currently exists in the United States that is looked over. I feel that I am much more sensitive and understanding to conversations of racism now, and that I can better understand the emotions of those who are directly impacted (those discriminated against) and those who are indirectly impacted (friends and family of those discriminated against). The history was also very beneficial to learn since we had never really learned anything past “There was slavery, and it was bad” in history classes

This course was very helpful in understanding race and racism in the United States. Racism is a huge issue in the United States and there are many people that don’t know that. This needs to be talked about more. I realized that in middle school and high school no one really talks about this topic and not many people get educated on race and racism and it’s really sad to see.

Figure 9:15 Examples of “Ideal Feel” Responses

<p>I have been very involved in preventing racism (intervening in situations, informing those around me about why certain remarks or slang is inappropriate, etc), but I was not aware of how long the fight against anti-black racism extended historically due to our education system picking and choosing how to represent American history (white-washing history). I greatly appreciate this class and hope this class continues in the future. I would love to take more classes related to black history and racism in the United States during my time here at Pitt.</p>
<p>This course really opened my eyes to the in-depth history and meaning of what racism is, and how it can be identified and stopped. I certainly improved my knowledge of 1. the history of racism in the US and how it carries over to today and 2. how to critically examine myself and how I might be unknowing committing racist practices. Now, I am better educated to detect and stop racism, both in myself and in others.</p>
<p>I'm so thankful to have gotten the opportunity to be taught a lot of this valuable information about anti-black racism. I've known that racism remains a huge problem in the United States, but I really appreciated learning more about the history of African Americans and really how deep rooted racism is in this country.</p>
<p>This course enhanced my understanding of systematic racism and how to combat it by showing me how much I do not know about racism itself. It proved that racism is an extremely complex issue that is deeply rooted in our society's history and still unsolved. I learned a lot about specific concepts that I did not know about previously and was made more aware of how to monitor my own thinking. Although I have participated in active anti-racist activities, this course reminded me that there is always more that can be done and has encouraged me to continuing activism, now with a deeper understanding of the history of the concept of racism in the United States.</p>

Figure 9:16 Examples of “Ideal Feel” Responses Continued

Appendix L : Examples of “Great Minds” Responses (n = 370/28%)

I appreciated this course. I knew there were gaps in my knowledge of history and current policies that continue oppression. I knew where the gaps were and I was excited to have this course offered so I could pay special attention to the lectures that I knew I needed to learn from. I liked the last few lecturers where the lecturers started to give specific calls to action.

This course has provided me with the education and tools to unlearn any false and harmful preconceived ideas and to acknowledge my own implicit bias. I have learned that being "not racist" is not enough. This course has taught me that we must acknowledge race and the racism that occurs at all levels of society. For the longest time, I was uncomfortable discussing racial issues with friends, strangers, or even family members so I would avoid it. I now know that stemmed from white privilege. I still have improvements to make and a lot to both learn and unlearn, but I have been striving and will continue to strive to be anti-racist.

This course really opened my eyes to the blatant privileges that white people hold in this country and how poorly minorities are treated. More people should take this course as I feel it is a promising step in order to combat black-racism.

This course helped me learn more about how the history of the US has led to the level of racism that we still see to this day, and why I didn't know about it before. I really enjoyed the lecture about how education informs racism.

It brought my attention to certain topics of racism that I was unaware of. For example, housing and the COVID pandemic have revealed yet another layer of racism in the united states that I did not know existed. I also now have a better understanding of how I can be an antiracist and encourage others to do learn more about the movement.

I knew that there was still a lot of racism in the United States but learning about how deeply rooted it was was unreal to me. This class fueled my desire to advocate for the Black community and fight racism.

Figure 9:17 Examples of "Great Minds" Responses

More than anything, it kept anti-black racism in the forefront of my mind all semester. It also provided me with the correct terms to discuss race and racism with those around me. I was also exposed to Black history more than I had ever been in an academic setting as well as the sociological background of race as a construct.
This course gave me a much greater understanding of how anti-black racism at a structural and institutional level. Before this course, I knew a fair amount about how anti-black racism operates on an individual level and how current events exemplify this, but to learn about something such as redlining and how these types of methods and rules have led us to a society where opportunity isn't as equal as we've always thought it to be is incredible. Learning about the Hill District really opened my eyes to how the past has really influenced our present and has placed certain individuals and areas at a disadvantage. Before this course, it was easy to think that the past is the past and plays little to no bearing on the present or future but as we've learned, that is definitely not the case.
Racism on an institutional and structural level is something that I only began to understand somewhat recently. Learning more about these deeply rooted causes and policies in place has helped direct me to which aspects of the fight against anti-Black racism I can best serve, as well as in which aspects of racism I still have unlearning to do.
Participating in this course has changed my understanding of race and racism in the United States. Before, I had a surface-level understanding of race and racism in the United States. That is, I knew some dictionary definitions of what they were. What this course taught me was some of the more specific parts of race and racism. I was able to understand the cultural background behind racism better as well as the nuances in some U.S. programs that show favoritism towards certain races.
I have never really had a thorough education in regards to racism within the United States. Most of my prior knowledge came from my own research so it was very beneficial to have a course dedicated to exploring racism in all facets.
Participating in this course really opened up my eyes because I'm from a predominantly white town and I was shocked to hear that racism occurs pretty much everywhere. But it has taught me where to look for it and now I can do my part in help stopping it.
Participating in this course changed my understanding of race and racism in the United States. I would consider myself pretty progressive in my beliefs and during the period of the quarantine, I really tried to learn about these topics to gain a new perspective. I believe that this course was just a further extension of that process that I started 6 months ago.
Participation in this course changed my understanding of racism in the United states because I didn't know how black people were being affected by it even in the present moment. I did not know about redlining or gentrification, or even about implicit bias or microaggressions. I didn't even know that "colorblind" was a thing/issue.

Figure 9:18 Examples of “Great Minds” Responses Continued

Appendix M : Examples of “Good Trouble” Responses (n = 490/37%)

It gave me more worldly knowledge around the thoughts I had. I liked understanding the "why" to back up my thoughts.
I left the course with a greater understanding of the historical circumstances that led to the current racial inequities in the world today.
It gave me a wholistic view and taught me new information that I never learned in school.
I think it made me see how some actions are actually considered racist when I thought they were harmful.
I was able to learn about the actual history of anti-Black racism, which I wasn't completely aware of before.
It gave me more information on the background of this country so that I could better understand how we ended up here
I now know more of the history behind racism and race. I am now educated in the different ways in which racism is still prevalent in the United States and how people are affected by it.
Participating in this course changed my understanding of race and racism in the United States by simply discussing about it every week.
It greatedened it a lot. This was an amazing course !!
It made me a more knowledgeable of the history
I am much more informed on both history and current issues. I also know a lot more terms and events than I did before.

Figure 9:19 Examples of "Good Trouble" Responses

This course gave me a deeper insight into the topics I already knew of at the surface level. It didn't completely "change" my understanding, but made me understand even more than I already did.
opened my eyes to racial injustice around me
It gave me more of an insight into the struggles that minorities in the US have to go through every day.
It made me understand it and what is happening a lot better.
This course definitely opened my eyes to how pervasive racism is in the U.S
It gave me a more educated background to the history of racism and how it still effects people and society today.
I became more aware of the historical roots of a lot of issues involving racism in the United States.
I have a deeper understanding of how our society is built on Black racism.
I was able to get a more in depth learning about the modern day issues that were strengthened over time through racism
I've learned new vocabulary and insights.
i learned that this is bigger than what i thought it was orginally. I learned that it affects every aspect of life.
To be honest, this course didn't really change my understanding of racism in the united states. I did learn about specific events in our history that explain racism.
I was not raised in the US so I learnt a host of new things.
It has widened my view on racism and I feel like I know a lot more about how history has affected the way America is today with regards to race.
It made me more aware of the ways racism manifests that I had never thought about or experienced as a white person
It made me a more informed individual who thinks about race and racism in the US.
I understood more of the history of racism in America and the contributions of minorities in United States history.
Participating in this course helped me understand how much of an effect race and racism leave on our society, as well as educating me on the history of it.
I was able t understand the roots of racism, as well as the struggles that minorities in todays society face.
It demonstrated specific examples of anti-black policies that helped to clarify narratives that I was previously aware of.
i reassured my understanding of race and racism in the united states
it showed me how there is a lot of systematic racism in this country that can stop others from rising up and doing well in everything.

Figure 9:20 Examples of “Good Trouble” Responses Continued

Appendix N : Examples of “Sounds Good” Responses (n = 190/14%)

I feel that I have been able to understand more of how and why minorities feel oppressed.
I learned more about racism from a cultural stand point.
Racism never had a reason to be present here in the United States, and this course did not change any of my beliefs on that.
I learned a lot about the history of the fight against racism.
i got more insight on the background and more details on what is happening
It helped be become more aware of what is going on around me.
I learned many things about race and culture that I did not know before.
I learned a lot about the history of the United States of America.
A very little amount.
I gained new insights and perspectives on important topics and matters
I now understand that racism will always be a part of our lives because everyone has their own views and we can't change peoples opinions.
By participating in this course, it made me realize how much racism is apart of our daily lives.
I helped me understand how deep of an issue racism is in all aspects of life In America
Although this course has not changed my opinion, it has made me more aware to situational issues regarding racism.
It made me more aware of it.

Figure 9:21 Examples of "Sounds Good" Responses

This course helped me see the amount of racism that occurs in our country on so many levels every day.
I don't think it really changed my understanding. I have always understood it. It did teach me some on history of race and racism.
It provided me with a lot of knowledge and information that was not aware of.
It provided me a better understanding of just how far into every aspect of life and society ABR goes.
I understand that some types of people have had difficulties in this country in regard to their race.
It gave me a better view of how racism exists in America
It opened my eyes to what has been going on for many many years.
gave me a a better understanding.
It made me more aware of what was actually going on, instead of what I thought.
It hasn't changed it that much since I have already seen racism.
It gave me more insight onto why institutional racism still exists and how to get rid of it.
It furthered my understanding
It made me realize how recent and even current a lot of these issues are in the US.
It corrected any misconceptions I had about racism in america.
It opened my eyes to the understanding of that which in what have that and can not have been like the other fact that any person can do that which she has not to have done with these forth from now on and such to that we do not know it can't.
It made me understand racism better.
It gave me more knowledge about race in general and the topics that are recent in our country today.
Not much, just learned that racism = bad a bunch
This course bettered my understanding of race and racism in the United States
It helped me learn about it from a new perspective
It really opened my eyes to discrimination in the U.S. and how it needs to be acted on.
Made me more knowledgeable about the specifics of racism
I now understand how deeply rooted in society racism goes back.
I learned some new words.
It made me become more aware.
It did not change my mind as to how i understand or view race, but it did open me up to other aspects of racism in the US that i have not previously thought about
I learned more about race than what I knew before.

Figure 9:22 Examples of "Sounds Good" Responses Continued A

This course has shown me a different perspective of socio-racial issues in our country although on the whole, I don't believe my understanding of racism in America has changed, just another set of perspectives have been added to them.
This course gave me broader knowledge and a greater depth of knowledge of race and racism in the US.
I now better understand the history and implications of racism in our society.
It gave me a deeper understanding of it all.
It opened my eyes to what is really happening and educated me on the facts.
This course helped me understand the structural problem the US has in dealing with race issues.
It gave me a new view on institutions powers and how they are rooted in anti-black racism.
I have more of an understanding of what is going on in the US regarding race.
It helped me understand new ways to think about these situations.
The course informed me on some history I didn't know about and the different types of subconscious racism.
I learned about aspects of black history that I did not have knowledge about before this course.
it challenged me by presenting me with new information that I had not known about before

Figure 9:23 Examples of "Sounds Good" Responses Continued B

Appendix O : Examples of “Cryptic Currencies” Responses (n = 13/1%)

I don't think it changed my views significantly. I understand that there are racist people in this country and some of those people unfortunately end up in positions of power sometimes. I do also think that some people who are part of minorities pass down to their children the idea that they will always be oppressed to some extent by white people. I think all people of all races and ethnicities need to change in order for change to happen in the United States as a whole.
I definitely learned more about different types of racism and was made aware to many of the issues of black people. But I disagreed with a lot of the material and felt a lot of the material from the professors was not examined critically.
To be honest it didn't change much. I experience it first hand. I am a Latino, an immigrant, first generation to come to America. I wouldn't say I am black nor white, nor a South American native, I am proud however of all of these heritages, because they compose who I am. I prefer not to look at racism as a systemic issue, but rather as something that eventually happens, which although tragic is never championed in this country. I believe we all can achieve what we desire independently of race in this country.
I struggled greatly with this class because the information was important to learn but I could not ask questions or learn from others.
I feel I did not learn anything about race and racism. However I did learn about African American culture.
This course did not change my understandings on race and racism in the U.S. because in my own upbringing at home and in my faith, I believe all people should be treated as we would treat ourselves. While I understand the concept of race, I still do not believe that a person's race should be the main focus of that person. I also do not think that ethnicity is a social construct because I feel that ethnicity refers to where in the world a person originates from, and that is a fact of life. This course has confirmed my beliefs and stances on racism as well, as it is imperative to treat everyone, including black people, with respect.
It showed a lot of one-sided views which is what the name of the class suggests, so I would say that it did a very good job at that. However, it seems like there was not much thought given as to why things are other than using the cause of racism to justify everything. I was not a fan of only hearing one outcome of the many different possibilities. The insight that was provided throughout the course was very informative nevertheless and I am grateful for it.

Figure 9:24 Examples of “Cryptic Currencies” Responses

Appendix P : Examples of “Not Impressed” Responses (n = 40/3%)

It did not really change my understanding of race and racism in the united states. I feel I was taught well in high school about these topics and this was more of a review for me.
It didn't change my understanding in a meaningful way - aside from some new rote information, I had already integrated or entertained in passing most of the more abstract overarching theories here.
It didn't change much, if anything it just confirmed my previous beliefs
This course really hasn't changed much for me. A lot of what I learned were things already taught to me in high school.
It didnt change my view. I know racism is wrong and Ive realized it more when Trump was president.
I already knew racism was disgustingly high in the US and it needs to be stopped but our racist roots are so deep it's hard especially when racism is still being taught.
It didn't change it, it was just a reinforcement of what I hear everyday.
It didn't. I learned all of this in my high school.
Honestly, it did not very much. I had done research into this on my own, so I did not learn a lot.
it didn't really change my understanding because I was taught in school about racism that was in place in the united states.
It did not really change, I already knew the significant problems and reform that was needed.
I feel as my opinions didn't change because they were the ones being taught, but I feel more informed on certain topics such as color blind racism.
My understanding did not change after completing this course.

Figure 9:25 Examples of "Not Impressed" Responses

Didn't change my view on the US at all, it's still the one of the worst countries when it comes to race relations, and pretty awful in the social justice scene in general.
I already understood race and racism previously. This class did not change my understanding.
It didn't really, I knew it was a problem before and continue to think that it is a problem. It cannot be solved on an individual level, but I try my best to do my part.
It did not really change my perspective because I was aware of most of this information prior to taking the course
This course did not change my understanding of race and racism because I had already took the time to educate myself.
Personally, it didn't change my understanding at all. I knew that racism in the US was a very big issue, especially seeing all that had happened in the past year.
it has not because I had a good education that taught me the same things and black friends who have shown me their perspective on different issues.
This class didn't do much for me. Some of what we learned was new information to me, but I already knew that racism is a major problem in the US.
This course did not change much as I already am a city kid and have already been well exposed to the different types of races and cultures that surround us and I have learned way more from those first hand experiences with people than I did in this class.
It didn't change that much, I knew most of the information already.
Honestly, it didn't. My understanding of these concepts has not changed much since before I took

Figure 9:26 Examples of “Not Impressed” Responses Continued

Appendix Q : Examples of “Ruffled Feathers” Responses (n = 26/2%)

I do see that in some circumstance there is racial discrimination. Although this class was very biased and focus only in the negatives throughout hundreds of years of history, and left out any argument for Whites. Currently, it seems as affirmative action is actually discriminating against whites as it gives more advantage to African Americans in society. Though some people still do discriminate against African American, there are many that view them as equal. This class showed me that equality is not really about being equal, as for African American to feel equal, Whites must discriminate against. I don't believe in this, I believe that all people should be equal, with not one above the other. This class only strengthens this view and made me lose respect for the equality movements as they are not truly about being equal. I now understand that racism is not being fixed, it's being transferred from one group to another, which should be unacceptable.
This class was a joke to be completely honest. While some of what was taught is true, a lot of it is just narrative being pushed onto us. It's sad to see that a university would be ok with this. It's so contradicting because several times it's said white people can't ignore race, but they also aren't allowed to acknowledge it. You push a narrative that truly is racist against whites.
It honestly did not change my understanding, and I felt as if opinions by the institution were forced onto me.
Not at all. This course failed to examine the ways in which racism is a product of material conditions and that racism is largely class oppression focused through a racial lens.
It confused me. This course is filled with buzzwords and contradictions, such as color-blindness being a racist idea. It may be idealistic, but calling it racist is a stretch to say the least.
To me, classes and discussions like the ones promoted by this class are what actually perpetuate racism in America. Suggesting that we need entire courses on how to be a decent person makes the average student feel like there's a reason to be afraid of everyone in their own country.
it did not change my views at all, and i think this class was very inaccurate in its teaching of racism. racism occurs with every race, not just black so if there is an anti racism course taught it should focus on all types of discrimination or else it is a waste of time.
I did not see an issue with racism in the United States before this class and I think that some of the ideas that were stated within the video did not prove to show racism. Some of the ideas listed in the video actually made me feel like they are trying to put the African American community against the caucasian community.

Figure 9:27 Examples of “Ruffled Feathers” Responses

The bias was so strong in the course, it was hard to get through, so honestly, I'm not sure.
If I am being honest I did not feel this course was as today relevant as it could have been, it felt like a chore I had to do every week and was not really engaging as I knew the basics of all of these topics
I feel like it was racist to give students a class solely on discrimination of blacks.
It didn't. I have never been a racist. I have always treated other people with the same respect regardless of their skin color. I will judge someone based on their behavior, not their looks. 99.9% of people taking this course feel the same way.
It really didn't change my opinion about race whatsoever. This course seemed very one-sided and it made myself and my peers feel slightly uncomfortable while going through the content of this course. This course would have been much more effective if we would have strictly analyzed data and history rather than implement assumptions about the entire Caucasian race and their "oppressive ways". I feel as if taking this course not only caused us unnecessary stress, but it also further fueled the "race war" in the United States because there was no opportunity for interpretation, dialogue, and discussion about whether or not people agreed with what was being stated. I believe that everyone should have an equal opportunity in this great country and I will not conform to a one-sided ideology in which colleges are indoctrinating their students.
It did not really change it. An online class that you force students to take won't do that.
Not much, sort of was just 5 minutes a week where I clicked a lot of buttons.
It didn't. This course just gave me more work on top of a full course load. I was told nothing more than an average activist's Instagram story would tell me.
It didn't. As a minority of African and Asian descent, I know most of the things that were presented in this course. Yet this program only gave attention to the African side, while the Asian side just got pushed aside. There was no difference except for a selfish spotlight on African Americans (and once Latinos) which would be fine in an optional course, but required for freshman? It felt like just a class for the school to look good as it did nothing for a majority of people.
It was difficult to pay attention to the course because I had other classes to do.
I think it amplified a lot of people's opinions.
I think this course was a little overdramatic. I'm not trying to sound naïve because I understand there are challenges for minority groups that are remnants of past discriminations. However, I don't think the racial boundaries are as severe as this course makes it seem. There was also no discussion of the reformative actions this administration has put into place to help racial minorities. The course simply addressed the past oppression with some iffy data.

Figure 9:28 Examples of “Ruffled Feathers” Responses Continued

Appendix R : The System of Review

In this chapter, I present the findings of a systematic literature review I conducted on the term and theoretical framework known as “racial literacy” (RL). In this review of the literature on racial literacy, I organize, situate, and present the literature in historical and chronological contexts. The process involved a systematic search of electronic databases, screening of article abstracts for degrees of relevance to the topic, followed by a full article review to determine the ultimate status of each article’s inclusion. In the succeeding paragraphs, I delineate in greater detail the methods employed in this systematic research process.

Electronic Database Search

I conducted a series of searches utilizing the features of three, powerful, widely-accepted, electronic databases: the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), PittCat, and Google Scholar. ERIC is an “online library of education research and information, sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education” (<https://eric.ed.gov>). I used ERIC as my primary search tool because of the extensive collection of education-related research articles it is known and expected to catalogue. In my years of doctoral study, ERIC has consistently appeared to be an “industry standard”, database of choice amongst my peers in educational research. As a secondary tool and supplement to ERIC, I utilized PittCat—the “home” database affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh. Described as “the main searching tool for all of the materials owned by the University Library System (ULS), including articles, books, ebooks, journal articles, ejournals, audio and video, digital images, government documents, microfilm and movies” (<https://pitt.libguides.com/pittcat>), PittCat granted additional access to an extensive cache of data. Access to both PittCat and ERIC is granted through an

active Pitt login and ULS account. As many journal articles are behind paywalls, using PittCat+ in tandem with ERIC allowed for increased maneuverability when access barriers were met.

The obstacles presented by paywalls and subscription-only access to much of the research produced in/for higher education publishing pipelines, contribute to a larger, more complex social problem referred to as “the digital divide” in social justice and racial equity discourse. Providing a “*freely accessible* web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across and array of publishing formats and disciplines (my emphasis)” is what makes Google Scholar especially important and relevant in deeply stratified economy and society (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Scholar). I used Google Scholar as a tertiary database, not only because I appreciate and respect the powerful, open-access, search tool it provides to the public, free from paywalls and subscriptions, but also because of its enhanced capaciousness as an extension of Google—the largest search engine in the world (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google>).

As this study is particularly interested in the concept and theoretical framework of racial literacy, I limited this search only to those studies that included/contained the compound term “racial literacy” in the title, subtitle, abstract, or key words. In order to ensure research studies under review met the standards of what can be deemed as academically rigorous and representative of contemporary scholarly research, the search results were limited to peer-reviewed publications published at any time in history. This time frame was chosen to ensure a comprehensive literature review would be possible. I wanted to consider for review, every article, book, or dissertation ever published on this discrete topic. In utilizing the keyword search term: racial literacy, the search yielded 98, non-duplicated, abstracts on ERIC. PittCat and Google Scholar did not produce additional results.

Screening and Streamlining the Literature

After conducting the initial electronic database search on ERIC, then crosschecking the search (by duplicating it) on PittCat and Google Scholar, and obtaining 98 results to consider, the next step was to narrow the results through a process that involved removing texts that did not contain the compound term “racial literacy” in the title, subtitle, abstract, or key words. This first cycle of screening resulted in 49 texts meeting that first criterion (with two exceptions made): 44 journal articles, a couple of books, and three dissertations. The Brown (2011) and Raskin et al. (2015) articles qualified for exception because despite not mentioning RL explicitly, the implicit connection and contribution to the RL conversation was clear. Additionally, the scope of this literature review was initially intended to be limited, geo-politically, to the United States. However, after reviewing the available literature, I decided not to disqualify any of the articles based on that criteria. This decision was made because there were only three articles that fell into this category (two from Brazil and one from Australia). As they were found to be relevant and insightful articles, it was clear that their inclusion added more value than their absence would.

The process for screening the books included in this literature review was different from that of the journal articles. In the preliminary stages of this study, I had become familiar with Guinier & Torres (2002) *The Miner’s Canary*, Douglass Horsford’s (2011) *Learning in a Burning House*, and Stevenson’s (2013) *Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools*. For discovering the other titles available, I employed the resources of a fourth, well-established database for books: Amazon—accessed at <https://amazon.com>. Using the same search terms: “racial literacy” in Amazon’s database produced several generally-related titles and ten directly-related (mentioned RL in the sub/title) book titles on racial literacy. Four of these titles were already included in the review (the three aforementioned and Twine, 2011). Notably, five of the

remaining six were published between 2016 and 2021. The outlier was a 2009 book by Bonnie Davis entitled, *The Biracial and Multiracial Student Experience: A Journey to Racial Literacy*. As this may have been the first book with RL presented in the title, it was retained for this literature review, despite the fact that the title made it obvious that it aligned with the Twine branch of racial literacy in contrast to the Guinier branch (more on that below). In total, ten books were included in this literature review. Nine were mentioned here and the tenth is accounted for in the following section.

Bibliographic Discovery of Literature

I have a research practice of studying the bibliographies and references of texts I deeply engage. How systematic or scientific this method is may be a conversation topic in some academic circles. For this study, that approach to searching for relevant literature yielded a number of relevant texts I decided to include. In the references of Sealey-Ruiz' (2011) article, I discovered "Race(ing) Around in Rhetoric and Composition Circles: Racial Literacy as the Way Out" (Johnson, 2009)—a fourth dissertation in my search. Under further scrutiny, this study may have been the first dissertation on the topic of racial literacy. In this same bibliography and the one from Sealey-Ruiz (2014), I found another early text with which I was unfamiliar: Bolgatz' (2005) *Talking Race in the Classroom*. This text, whose title does not include racial literacy, is perhaps the first book explicitly focused on RL, and particularly in the field of education. Bolgatz (2005) text will be discussed further under early adapters in stage two, section three of this literature review.

There was also one journal article I uncovered in the bibliography of Brown's (2011) article, "Breaking the cycle of Sisypheus: social education and the acquisition of critical sociocultural knowledge about race and racism in the United States". Like Brown's (2011),

Milner's (2003) article: "Reflection, Racial Competence, and Critical Pedagogy: How Do We Prepare Pre-service Teachers to Pose Tough Questions?" discussed racial literacy without calling by that name. The final text I discovered using this method was Twine's (2011) text, *A White Side of Black Britain: Interracial intimacy and racial literacy*. This text was cited in a few of the bibliographies I reviewed. Ultimately, I added four significant texts from this method. Upon completion of these processes, 45 journal articles, 10 books, and four dissertations totaling 59 scholastic/academic, literary texts were included in this literature review.

Appendix S : Select Headlines From Related News Articles c. 08/2020-05/2021.



Figure 9:29 Screenshot of Headlines From Daily News - 08/21/2020

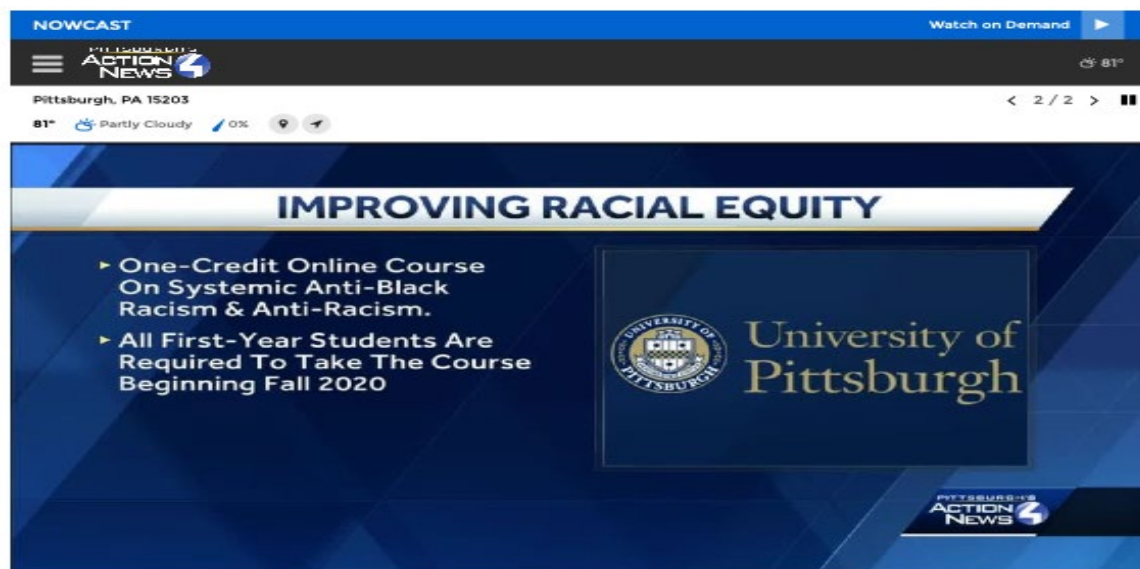


Figure 9:30 Screenshot From WTAE: PGH's Action News 4 Broadcast

U Pitt's mandatory anti-racism class is filled with critical race theory, BLM talking points

The University of Pittsburgh's mandatory anti-Black racism course for freshman is filled with critical race theory and Black Lives Matter talking points.

The university touted the content of the course, even as President Donald Trump signed an executive order banning such trainings, calling them "un-American propaganda."



Ben Zeisloft | Staff Reporter, Daily Wire

Tuesday, December 22, 2020 9:00 PM

<https://www.campusreform.org/article?id=16474>

Figure 9:31 Screenshot of Headline From CampusReform.com - 12/22/2020



NEWS ROUNDUP

Pitt Introduces Mandatory Anti-Racism Course for Freshmen

Starting this fall, all incoming freshman will be required to take a one-credit course focused on anti-racism at the University of Pittsburgh, according to the New York Daily News. The course, “Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance,” was developed by a 12-member committee of faculty and students. Other interested students can opt to take the [...]

By — Sarah Wood

Aug 21st, 2020

Starting this fall, all incoming freshman will be required to take a one-credit course focused on anti-racism at the University of Pittsburgh, according to the [New York Daily News](#).

The course, “Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance,” was developed by a 12-member

Figure 9:32 Screenshot of Headline From DiverseEducation.com - 08/21/2020



<https://pittnews.com/article/164790/silhouettes-2021/alaina-roberts-telling-the-truth-about-history/>

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Figure 9:33 Screenshot of Headline From The Pitt News - 2021

College students push for race and ethnic studies classes to be required, but some campuses resist

The Cal State system has added ethnic studies as a graduation requirement

by MOLLY STELLINO
September 11, 2020

When Morgan Ottley, a neuroscience major at the University of Pittsburgh, noticed in the spring of her sophomore year that most of her teachers did not address racial disparities in the medical field, she wanted the university to change its curriculum. Where, she thought, was the instruction on how shingles appear on the skin of Black people? Why was there no mention of Black scientists, like Alexa Canady, who had made noteworthy progress in these fields?

Ottley, now a senior, is pushing Pittsburgh to make classes more inclusive. “Something’s gotta give,” she said. “Why am I not learning about people who look like me?”

Ottley is the president of the Black Action Society, which represents the needs and concerns of Black students at the university. Hers is one of several student groups across the country that are calling on universities to help address racism by making courses on race and ethnicity a graduation requirement.



Morgan Ottley is the president of the Black Action Society at the University of Pittsburgh, one of several student groups across the country that are calling on universities to help address racism by making courses on race and ethnicity a graduation requirement. Credit: Photo courtesy Morgan Ottley

Figure 9:34 Screenshot of Article From HechingerReport.org - 09/11/2020

Left 'in the dark': Status of Black studies course requirement unclear

By Natalie Frank, Senior Staff Writer

Alaina Roberts helped create a formal proposal last summer that called for all undergraduates to complete a Black studies course as part of their general education requirements. Her proposal followed a summer petition from alumna Sydney Massenberg that called for the same requirement — which Pitt said it was considering implementing at the time.

But since the petition reached the Provost Ann Cudd's office last fall, Roberts has been left "in the dark" about its progress.

"The question is certainly an important one but I'm actually kind of in the dark," Roberts, associate professor of history, said. "I have not been notified by the administration that anything is necessarily happening with the kind of course that came out of Sydney's petition."

University spokesperson Kevin Zwick said Pitt does not currently have a timeline for when it will act on the petition. Pitt's Faculty Assembly and Student Government Board both passed resolutions supporting the new requirement after Massenberg initially proposed it last summer.

Zwick said the provost's office created a group of faculty, advisers, associate deans, vice presidents of academic affairs and vice provosts from Pitt's five campuses to discuss general education requirements at Pitt.

"The provost's office has engaged a working group of administrators from across the University's five campuses to discuss the alignment and coordination of general education requirements across all entities, and this includes the proposed Black studies course approved by the University Senate," Zwick said.

Zwick did not directly respond to questions about complaints that Pitt is taking too long to adopt the new requirement.

While administrators are currently discussing the full Black studies course requirement, Pitt implemented a new one-credit class on anti-Black racism in August that all first-year students were required to take, but was open to any student. Roberts said while she appreciates the effort that the provost and the original committee — 12 professors and one student — put into the course, titled Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology and Resistance, she's hoping it goes through a sort of "evolution" from its original asynchronous, online format.



Sam Alburger | Staff Photographer

History professor Alaina Roberts helped create a formal proposal last summer that called for all undergraduates to complete a Black studies course as part of their general education requirements.

Figure 9:35 Screenshot of Article From The Pitt News - 04/14/2021

FEATURES & ARTICLES

New Anti-Racism Course Aims to Inspire Paths of Scholarly Activism and Black Study

August 20, 2020



As calls for racial justice echo across the country, the University of Pittsburgh has developed a new course to allow students to gain an understanding of the county's long struggle with anti-Black racism.

The course, "Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance," will be offered as a required, asynchronous, one-credit offering for first-year students on the Pittsburgh campus starting this fall. Students at the regional campuses, as well as any other interested students, may also register.

Explore Sections

<https://www.pitt.edu/pittwire/features-articles/new-anti-racism-course-aims-inspire-paths-scholarly-activism-and-black-study>

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Figure 9:36 Screenshot of Headline From Pitt Wire - 08/20/2020

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